MAXIMUM ROCKNROLL

#267 — AUGUST 2005 — $4.00

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MAXIMUMROCKNROLL

TOP 10

For what it's worth, here's some of the MRR crew's current Top 10 (or so) lists of stuff we've reviewed this month.

TIM BROOKS

- THE PARKINSONS-Up for Sale-EP
- CLOROX GIRLS-This Dimension/Animal Eyes-45
- ROCKY AND THE SWEDEN-THC-LP
- NERVOUS PATTERNS-You Can't Change-45
- CUT-THROAT-At the Seams-EP
- FUNCTIONAL BLACKOUTS-EP
- THE PONYS-Celebration Castle-LP
- SELFISH-Cause Pain-12"
- PERSEVERE-Sex Tracks-EP
- PORK DUKES-Pop Stars/Save the Pigs-45

MITCH CARDWELL

- HUMAN EYE-Human Eye-LP
- V/A-Zine: White-EP
- FUSES-Eastern Cities-LP
- JOHN WILKES BOOZE-LP
- THE PONYS-Celebration Castle-LP
- CLOROX GIRLS-This Dimension/Animal Eyes-45
- NERVOUS PATTERNS-You Can't Change-45
- FUNCTIONAL BLACKOUTS-EP
- BLACK TIME-I Spit on Your Lifestyle-EP
- Horizontal Action Blackout 2005

ROB COONS

- HIGH ON CRIME-Pour Some Sewage on Me-EP
- SELFISH-Cause Pain-12"
- ROCKY AND THE SWEDEN-THC-LP
- BLOOD SPIT NIGHTS-Despot Butchery-12"
- ALTERCADO-El Ruido y la Rabia-LP
- DISCLOSE-Apocalypse of Death-EP
- PERSEVERE-Sex Tracks-EP
- RAKKAUS-Tyo Vapauttaa-EP
- CUT-THROAT-At the Seams-EP
- Gloomfest - All bands that played

PAUL CURRAN

- FUSES-Eastern Cities-LP
- TOYS THAT KILL-Don't Take My Clone-45
- MAN IN GRAY/UNSACRED HEARTS-split EP
- V/A-To the Bitter End Vol. 2-CD
- LA PLEBE-Entre Cerveza Ritmo, y Emocion-CD
- PORK DUKES-Pop Stars/Save the Pigs-45
- LEBENDEN TOTEN-Dead Noise-EP
- THE PARKINSONS-Up for Sale-EP
- SHOP FRONTS-Don't Quit-EP
- ROCKY AND THE SWEDEN-THC-LP

JONATHAN FLOYD

- BLACK SUNDAY-Tronic Blanc-CD
- CLOROX GIRLS-This Dimension/Animal Eyes-45
- COUNTRY TEASERS-Live Album-CD
- EYE FOR AN EYE-Dystans-LP
- FUSES-Eastern Cities-LP
- GIFT OF GOATS-All I Think About…"-EP
- JOHN WILKES BOOZE-LP
- LA PLEBE-Entre Cerveza Ritmo, y Emocion-CD
- REGULATIONS-LP
- THE PONYS-Celebration Castle-LP

JEFF HEERMANN

- BLACK TIME-I Spit on Your Lifestyle-EP
- CLOROX GIRLS-This Dimension/Animal Eyes-45
- DISSIMILIARS-Jimmy's Room-EP
- FUNCTIONAL BLACKOUTS-EP
- HUMAN EYE-Human Eye-LP
- MEXICAN BLACKBIRDS-Fear of Texas-12"
- NERVOUS PATTERNS-You Can't Change-45
- THE PARKINSONS-Up for Sale-EP
- RAW POWER-Fuck Authority-2xCD
- REGULATIONS-LP

KENNY KAOS

- THE HATEPINKS/SHAKIN NASTIES-split EP
- CLOROX GIRLS-45
- THE MEXICAN BLACKBIRDS/PINK SWORDS-split LP
- TEENAGE BOTTLEROCKET/BILL THE WELDER-split EP
- MS. 45-Pop!-EP
- TOYS THAT KILL-Don't Take My Clone-45
- THE PARKINSONS-Up for Sale-EP
- MEXICAN BLACKBIRDS-Fear of Texas-12"
- PORK DUKES-Pop Stars/Save the Pigs-45
- DE STIPJES-Feel Lucky Hippy?-EP

CAROLYN KEDDY

- THE DIRTBOMBS-CD / JOHN WILKES BOOZE-LP
- FATALS-Yeah Baby!-EP
- HUMAN EYE-LP / SOUTH FILTHY-LP
- COUNTRY TEASERS-Live Album-CD
- LOW POINT DRAINS-Bottle o' Whiskey-EP
- FUNCTIONAL BLACKOUTS-EP / DE STIPJES-EP
- THE HATEPINKS/SHAKIN NASTIES-split EP
- We Jam Econo-film
- Horizontal Action Blackout 2005
- Easy Action, The Mouth-Offs, Double D's-live

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Scene Reports: continuously, with photos!
Interviews: continuously, with photos!
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MAXIMUMROCKNROLL

TOP 10

Please send us records (2 copies of vinyl, if possible– one for MRR and one for reviewer), or CD-only releases. See reviews section for where to send tapes & CD-Rs.

WILL WEBER KNEITEL

- SCREECHING WEASEL-CD
- GIFT OF GOATS-All I Think About…"-EP
- SOUTH FILTHY-Crackin' Up-LP
- CLOROX GIRLS-This Dimension/Animal Eyes-45
- HIGH ON CRIME-Pour Some Sewage On Me- EP
- EYE FOR AN EYE-Dystans-LP
- SOVIETTES-LP 3-CD
- TOYS THAT KILL-Don't Take My Clone-45
- THE PARKINSONS-Up for Sale-EP
- GIANT HAYSTACKS-live

RAY LUJAN

- JOHNIE 3-CD / THE PARKINSONS-EP
- AMBER JETS-Swimming-CD
- LAST UNDER THE SUN-All Empires-CD
- PORK DUKES-Pop Stars/Save the Pigs-45
- NERVOUS PATTERNS-You Can't Change-45
- THE HOLOGRAMS-CD
- FUSES-Eastern Cities-LP
- V/A-Kiss or Kill Vol. 2-CD
- MS. 45-Pop!-EP / THE YELLOW BELTS-CD
- EDDIE AND THE HOT RODS-live

ALLAN MCNAUGHTON

Still out jammin' econo...

GOLNAR NIKPOUR

- SELFISH-Cause Pain-12"
- LEBENDEN TOTEN-Dead Noise-EP
- PERSEVERE-Sex Tracks-EP
- CUT-THROAT-At the Seams-EP
- CLOROX GIRLS-This Dimension/Animal Eyes-45
- NO HEROES-We Ain't No Heroes-EP
- EYE FOR AN EYE-Dystans-LP
- FUSES-Eastern Cities-LP
- ALTERCADO-El Ruido y la Rabia-LP
- DEATHREAT-live

DONNA POOLE

- ALTERCADO-El Ruido y la Rabia-LP
- NERVOUS PATTERNS-You Can't Change-45
- TOYS THAT KILL-Don't Take My Clone-45
- SCARRED/VOID CONTROL-split EP
- FUNCTIONAL BLACKOUTS-EP
- CLOROX GIRLS-This Dimension/Animal Eyes-45
- RAKKAUS-Tyo Vapauttaa-EP
- CUT-THROAT-At the Seams-EP
- DE STIPJES-Feel Lucky Hippy?-EP
- The Double D's, Creepy-live

BRUCE ROEHRS

- SWELLBELLYS-Bullets & Blades-LP
- VOLXSTURM/ULTIMO ASALTO-split EP
- PERSEVERE-Sex Tracks-EP
- SELFISH-Cause Pain-12"
- ROCKY AND THE SWEDEN-THC-LP
- CUT-THROAT-At the Seams-EP
- RAKKAUS-Tyo Vapauttaa-EP
- COUGHING UP BLOOD-Copstache-EP
- MISHAP-Truth of War-EP
- BODIES/REDUCERS SF-live

RYAN WELLS

- COUNTRY TEASERS-Live Album-CD
- REGULATIONS-LP
- HUMAN EYE-Human Eye-LP
- V/A-Just Go Destroy Everything in Sight! -CD
- FUNCTIONAL BLACKOUTS-EP
- NERVOUS PATTERNS-You Can't Change-45
- CLOROX GIRLS-This Dimension/Animal Eyes-45
- THE PARKINSONS-Up for Sale-EP
- DE STIPJES-Feel Lucky Hippy?-EP
- V/A-Killed by an Axe-EP

ZINE TOP TEN

- Barricata #3
- Faking Distance/Birthday & Christmas-split zine
- How Much Art Can You Take?/Destroy What Bores You-split zine
- Memory Loss #1 & 2
- Too Much Coffee Man #22
- The Rise and Fall
- Skin Graft #6
- F.U.C.K. #3
- Trust #111
- Warning #2

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#150/Nov '95. NY Loose, Snap-Her, Sick Boys, Splatterheads, Pipe, Pregnant Man, Final Conflict, Rawness, Stink, Goblins, Smellie Fingers.

#151/Dec '95. Lowdowns, My White Bread Mom, Queen B's, Electric Frankenstein, Turtlehead, Serpico, Trick Babys, In/Humanity, Stains, Varukers, Pist, Terrible Virtue.

#153/Feb '96. Snort, Hatchetface, Little Ugly Girls, ADZ, Oxymoron, NOTA, Stun Guns, Surfin' Turnips, Gutfiddle, Karen Monster, Dimestore Haloes.

#154/Mar '96. Motards, Subincision, Stisism, Donnas, Stallions, Count Backwards.

#156 pt 1/May '96. Public Toys, Crunch, Peter & The Test Tube Babies, Nails Of Hawaiian, Splash 4, Yawp!, Lifetime, Sickoids.

#156 pt 2/May '96. Australian Special: Beanflipper, Melancholy, Blitz Babiez, Crank, SubRosa, Mindsnare, TMT, H-Block, B-Sides, Fallout, Frenzal Rhomb, Lawnsmell, One Inch Punch, Chickenshit, No Deal.

#160/Sept '96. Automatics, Boycot, Toast, Morning Shakes, Mormons, John Q. Public, Sex Offenders, Ballgagger, Business, Apocalypse Babys, Good Riddance.

#161/Oct '96. Jet Bumpers, Steel Miners, Divisia, Lopo Drido, Red #9, Nothing Cool, Sink, Sires, Newtown Grunts.

#162/Nov '96. Phantom Surfers, Candy Snatchers, the Stain, National Guard, Torches To Rome, Restos Fosiles, Two Bo's Maniacs, Snuka, Redemtion 87, Torture Kitty.

#163/Dec '96. Last Sons of Krypton, Prostitutes, Wig Hat, Boys, Let It Rock, Enemy Soil, Vulcaneers, Half Empty, Zeros, Deadcats, Teen Idles.

#166/Mar '97. Walking Abortions, Hickey, '77 Spreads, Sanity Assassins, Cards In Spokes, Joey Tampon & The Toxic Shocks, Adjective Noun, Suicide King, Lenguas Armadas, Trauma, De Crew.

#172/Sept '97. Withdrawals, Judgement, No Motiv, Oppressed Logic, Truents, Left For Dead, Yellowskin, Weird Lovemakers, Smash Your Face, Flatus, Straight Faced, Klaxon, X-It.

#174/Nov '97. Stratford Mercenaries, Lickity Split, Bladder, Piss Shivers, Barnhills, In/Humanity, Education theme issue.

#175/Dec '97. One Man Army, Those Unknown, Boiling Man, Piao Chong, Exploding Crustaceans, Last Year's Youth, Heartdrops, Dirty Burds, Dimestore Haloes.

#179/April '98. Boy Sets Fire, Tres Kids, Idyls, Spat & The Guttersnipes, The Posers, Explosive Kate, Douche Flag.

#180/May '98. Reinforce, Discontent, TV Killers, Slack Action, Eyeliners, Mademoiselle, MK Ultraviolence, Haulin' Ass, 97a, Infiltrators, Jack Saints, Stray Bullets.

#181/June '98. Grapefruit, Druggies, DDI, Bonecrusher, Normals, All Bets Off, Stiletto Boys, Summerjack, Cell Block 5.

#184/Sept '98. Absentees, Devoid of Faith, UXA, Umlaut, Four Letter Word, Streetwalkin' Cheetahs, Ricanstruction, Libertine, Indecision, Snarkout Boys.

#185/Oct '98. Traitors, Wimpy Dicks, Armed & Hammered, Dylan McKays, NME, Tezacrifco, Worm, Roswells, Raxola, Beatnik Termites.

#186/Nov '98. Registrators, August Spies, Marilyn's Vitamins, Chinese Love Beads.

#187/Dec '98. Real Kids, Sawn Off, Cretins, Spider Cunts, Heroines, Third Party, No Class, Skabs.

#188/Jan '99. Stitches, Neighbors, Mansfields, Real Swinger, Marauders, Mark Bruback, Mars Moles, DOA.

#189/Feb '99. Monster X, Peter & the Test Tube Babies, Steam Pig, Maurauders, Yakuza, Dead Beat, Halfways, Hot Rod Honeys, DeRita Sisters.

#190/Mar '99. John Holstrom, Powerhouse, Brezhnev, Slappy, Black Pumpkin, Smartbomb ca, Wanda Chrome, Long Gones, Smogtown, Halfways, Tilt.

#191/April '99. Murder Suicide Pact, Kil Kare, Dudman, Super Hi-Fives, Better Than Elvis DJs, Pet Peeves, Loose Ends, Slingshot Episode.

#192/May '99. Los Crudos, Burning Kitchen, Henry Fiat's Open Sore, Polythene, Kangaroo Recs.

#193/June '99. Munster Recs, DS-13, Safety Pins, Pussycats, Piolines, False Alarm, Darlington, Bad Stain, Bodies, Houseboy, Mullets.

#194/July '99. Deathreat, Last Match, God Hates Computers, Fokkewolf, Flesh Eating Creeps, Aside, Hoppin' Mad, Kid Dynamite, Thee Outcasts.

#195/Aug '99. Moral Crux, RC5, Have Nots, Ill Tempered, Dysentery, Greg Higgins, Revlons, Larry & the Gonowheres..

#196/Sept '99. Hopscotch, Catharsis, Orchid, The Pricks, Grissle, Product X, Reaching Forward, Emerge, Third Degree, "Epicenter Zone '90-'99".

#197/Oct '99. Reducers SF, Lower Class Brats, Reactor 7, TheGodsHateKansas, Futuro Incierto, Showcase Showdown, Waifle, Flat Earth Recs.

#198/Nov '99. Hail Mary, Pressure Point, Bump 'N Uglies, The Victims, A//Political, Outlast

#199/Dec '99. Locust, Ratos de Porao, USV, Razlog Za, G-3, Swarm, WHN?, Mt. St. Helens, Black Cat Music, Enemy Soil.

#200/Jan '00. American Steel, Curse, Gee Vaucher, Hers Never Existed, Aaron Cometbus, Active distro, Toxic Narcotic, MRR catalogue #100-200.

#201/Feb '00. Beerzone, Towards An End, Daybreak, "Best Punk Singles of the '90s," the WTO riots in Seattle.

#202/March '00. KTMWQ, Real Estate Fraud, Strike Out, Broken Rekids, the Haggard, GC5, Gore Gore Girls, the Catheters.

#203/April '00. Spazz, Slang, *Slug & Lettuce* zine, *Suburban Voice* zine, As We Once Were, Red Angel Dragnet, Four Letter Words, Slampt Records, the Wednesdays, the Fuses.

#204/May '00. Cocksparrer, Talk Is Poison, Red Scare, Put Downs, Out Cold, Geraldine, Michael Knight, CBGaY, Pillage People.
#205/June '00. Punks With Kids special. Skudz, 50 Million, Legion, Wilbur Cobb, Coalition.

#206/July '00. Drunk, ESL, Ambition Mission, Lord High Fixers, Cripple Bastards, Dig Dug, Federation X, Amulet, Valentine Killers.

#207/Aug '00. Harum Scarum, Raw Power, Unseen, Pekinska Patka, Hudson Falcons, Dementia 13, Confine, Allergic to Whores.

#208/Sept '00. Le Shok, the Commies, the Chemo Kids, Day of Mourning, Affront, Diaspora, Whippersnapper, Hopeless/Sub City, Prank, Countdown to Oblivion

#209/Oct '00. Loose Lips, Godstomper, Peace of Mind, FYP, I Farm, Annalise, Cattle Decapitation, Riot/Clone.

#210/Nov '00. J Church, Profane Existence, Pezz, Pre-Teens, Templars, This Machine Kills, Subtonix, OB.

#214/Mar '01. Crispus Attucks, Fetish, Lifes Halt, Mr. Roboto, Dream Dates, Satan McNugget, Havoc, Briefs.

#215/April '01. No Means No, Vitamin X, Injections, Y, Dils, Last In Line, Don Austin, Deranged Records

#216/May '01. Propagandhi, Angelic Upstarts, Discordance Axis, Ruination, Photographer: Chris Boarts, Strap-Ons, Lynnards Innards

#217/June '01. Joey Ramone R.I.P., Tear It Up, Skitsystem, The Pattern, CrimethInc., Esperanza, The Chicago Blackout, Photographer: Ace

#218/July '01. Guyana Punchline, Les Sexareenos, The Devil Is Electric, Red Monkey, White Collar Crime, Forca Macabra, The Ataris, Suicide, The Mob

#219/Aug '01. "Fix It!" cycling article, Crucial Unit, Lost Sounds, Lombardies, Flowers in the Dustbin pt. 1, Casualties, Resinators, *P.U.N.K.*, Slaughter & the Dogs, Anti-Flag, Dontcares, S'Bitch.

#220/Sep '01. Latin American Issue. Aubuso Sonoro, Anti-Todo, Fuerza X, Apatia No, Manganzoids, Demencia, Sick Terror, Tocatta y Bulla, NTN, Argies, Reconcile, Anti-Korpus, Ruido De Odio, Los Pepiniyos, Rebelion Disidente, Brazil Scum , Kim Bae Photo Essay.

#221/Oct '01. Tales from the G8 Summit, Reflections, Soophie Nun Squad, Totalitär, True North, Wontons, Sin Dios, Bottles & Skulls, Scarred For Life, Flowers in the Dustbin pt. 2, Remains of the Day, Ritchie Whites, B'67.

#222/Nov '01. Dios Hastio, Tragedy, Four Letter Word, *Salad Days* author Charles Romalotti, Very Metal, Maurice's Little Bastards, the Rotters, MDC Brazilian tour diary, the Cravats, JR Ewing, Dutch scene report, extended news section, "Globalization Rhetoric & Reality,"

#223/Dec '01. "US Policy in the Middle East," "Revisiting 1948," Manifesto Jukebox, Good Riddance, Pokers, Viimenen Kolonna, Bluebloods, Vitamin X tour diary, Flakes, Pg. 99, the Mob, 7 Days of Samsara.

#224/Jan '02. "Legislation Since Sept. 11," Rendencion 9.11, Metro Youth, Severed Head of State, Piranhas, Paraf, Backstabbers, Inc, An Albatross, Citizen Fish Tour, SPAM Records, the Virus, Action Time.

#225/Feb '02. Lengua Armada, Breaker Breaker, 3 Yrs. Down, Scrotum Grinder, Turun Tauti, Flux Of Pink Indians, Holding On, Pauki, 86'd, See You In Hell, Red Light Sting, Nazis From Mars, Scare Tactic.

#226/Mar '02. Queer punk special issue. Vaseline, Quails, Skinjobs, Italian queer punk report, Vaginal Davis, Feelings on a Grid, Sissies, Scott Free, Dumba, Columns.

#227/Apr '02. Bellrays, Rhinos, Wasted, Kristofer Pasanen, Business, Assert, DS 13 tour report, Life Set Struggle, Iowaska, Zounds.

#229/June '02. Countdown To Putsch, The Awakening, Dave Hill Distribution, Holier Than Thou, Kill Devil Hills, Sound Of Failure, E.T.A., Nubs, Les Baton Rouge, New Disorder Records, Career Suicide, Swellbellys, The Sinyx.

#230/July '02. Bitchin', Redencion 911, Phantom Limbs, Secretions, Holy Molar, Sharp Knife, Mighty John Waynes, A Global Threat, Groovie Ghoulies, Reproach, Annie Anxiety.

#231/Aug '02. Epoxies, Puppy Vs. Dyslexia, Koro, Blocko, Amdi Petersen's Armé, Piss & Vinegar Zine, Schizophrenic Records, Toys That Kill, Give Us Barabbas, Dirt.

#232/Sept '02. "No Future" article, Lost, Fartz, Sell Outs, Razors Edge, Stakeout, Dillinger Four, All or Nothing HC, Fleshies, Bridge Nine Records, Akashic Books, Liberty.

#233/Oct '02. "All Ages" article, Scholastic Deth, Runnamucks, Sinners & Saints, Panic, Gasolheads, Jewws, Futures, Michael Landon's Commandos, Storm the Tower, Against Me!, Balance of Terror, Class Assassins, Spazm 151.

#234/Nov '02. Snobs, What Happens Next? Brazilian tour, The Oath, Radio 4, Feederz, Charm City Suicides, Selfish, Riot 99, End On End, Peawees, Born/Dead.

#235/Dec '02. Anti-war Special Issue. Anti-war guest columns. Anti-war scene reports. Articles: "Reading for Democracy," "War on Iraq?" "Unfinished American Revolution," Resource Guide. "US Involvement in Iraq,""Axis of Empire." Long Island DIY Scene, What Happens Next? Brazilian tour part 2, Smalltown, Kylesa, Crash & Burn.

#236/Jan '03. Mr. California & State Police, Iron Lung, Riff Randells, Chainsaw, *Artcore*, Latterman, Travis Cut, Phenomenauts, Pretty Little Flower, X-Cretas.

#237/Feb '03. Top Ten Records of 2002, "Music as a Weapon: Artists in Wartime," Dirt Bike Annie, Let It Burn, Stockyard Stoics, King Khan & Shrines, 625 Records, Feast Or Famine, Rudimentary Peni, Coachwhips, Self Defense.

#238/Mar '03. World Burns To Death, Chronics, Vilently Ill, Dystopia, Pilger, Exotic Fever, Brezhnev, R.A.M.B.O., Blown To Bits, Put To Shame, Deconditioned, This Bike Is A Pipe Bomb, Monsters.

#239/Apr '03. Romanian D-beat, Meconium Records, Amazombies, Abandoned Hearts Club, Mike V. & the Rats, Nicki Sicki, Bigamists, Bolivia article, Negatives, Kuolema, Defiance.

#240/May '03. I Quit, Apers, Headless Horsemen, Lesser of Two, Barse, Nightmare, Music Zine Roundtable, Exploding Hearts, Flesh Packs, Blacklist Brigade.

#241/June '03. Tyrades, Lumbergh, The Stand By Me, New Mexican Disaster Squad, Cut the Shit, Libertinagem, 17th Class, the Ends, He Who Corrupts, Deathbag, Cria Cuervos.

#242/July '03. Pensacola and San Francisco punk protest reports, John Wilkes Booze, Anfo, Bob Suren, Migra Violenta, Jackson 8, *Snakepit* zine, Krigshot, the Rites, Deadfall.

#243/Aug '03. "Media Alliance and the FCC," Striking Distance, Malcontents, Invisible City, Books Lie, Charm City Art Space, Hopeless Dregs of Humanity, I Shot Cyrus, Sunday Morning Einsteins, What the Kids Want, Onion Flavored Rings.

#244/Sept '03. None More Black, Deadline, Rai Ko Ris, Boxed In, Exploding Hearts, Raving Mojos, Blackout Terror, Morticia's Lovers, Thee Fine Lines, *Trust* zine.

#245/Oct '03. No Time Left, Riistetyt, Intense Youth, The Gimmies, Ass End Offend, Artimus Pyle, La Fraction, Kung Fu Rick, The Horror.

#246/Nov '03. Punk & Resistance in Israel, Letters from Palestine, No Choice, FM Knives, Bury the Living, Marked Men, The Dirty Burds, Provoked.

#247/Dec '03. DSB, The Boils, Popular Shapes, Phoenix Foundation, Bathtub Shitter, Meet the Virus, Cropknox, "Punk Babies on Tour" Article.

#248/Jan '04. Discharge, Superhelicopter, Jed Whitey, Black Friday '29, Find Him And Kill Him, The Lids, Impratical Cockpit, Face Up To It, History Of Maximum Rocknroll Radio.

#249/Feb '04. From Ashes Rise, Hagar the Womb, This Is My Fist, Skip Jensen, Gride, Katy Otto/Mike Taylor Dialogue, John Yates, Pointing Finger.

#250/Mar '04. Best Records of 2003, Miami FTAA protests, Clorox Girls, FIYA, "La Villita: Chicago Pilsen Scene," Terminus Victor, Restarts, Damage Done, Knights of New Crusade.

#251/April '04. The Fuse!, Väkivaltaa, Modern Machines, Microcosm, Migra Violenta Euro tour diary, Allegiance, Neurotic Swingers, Xavier Lepaige Photos, Le Scrawl, Vrah.

#252/May '04. Fucked Up, Firestarter, Inepsy, Laukaus, Great Clearing Off, Radio Reelers, Extreme Noise Records, 46 Short, The State, John The Baker, Free Verse, Chrystaei Branchaw photos.

#253/June '04. Sweet J.A.P., Gorilla Angreb, Vöetsek, Minority Blues Band, Scruvy Dogs, Molotov Cocktail, Kidnappers, Schifosi, King Ly Chee, YDI.

#254/July '04. No Hope For The Kids, Dropdead, Diskords, Breakfast, Asschapel, I Excuse, Strung Up, To Hell & Back, Four Eyes, Lamant, Gammits MW, Portland, Boston, Germany.

#255/Aug '04. "Punk's Not Dead, Reagan Is" Special Issue. Leatherface, Get It Away, The Hatepinks, Keen Monkey Work, New York City, South Dakota, Czech Republic, Philippines, Russia.

#256/Sep '04. The Observers, Witchhunt, Annihilation Time, Zann, Eskapo, FxPxO, Haymarket Riot, Fourth Rotor, Les Georges Lenigrad, Texas scene, Newfoundland, Indiana, England.

#257/Oct '04 The Election Issue, Jesse Townley, Matt Gonzalez, Rattus, Fighting Dogs, Hero Dishonest, Kickz, The Boss Martians, Reactionary Three, Slovakia, Australia, South Wales, South East Asia.

#258/Nov '04. Career Suicide, Cathy Wilkerson of the Weather Underground, No Fucker, The Repos, Dominatrix, Ashtray, Deadstop, Midnight Creeps, Michale Graves, The Diffs, The Shemps, Abi Yo Yo's.

#259/Dec '04. Bad Business, Penelope Houston, Rambo, AI, Ass, I Attack, The Krunchies, A-Lines, Insurgence Records, The Hates, Accidents, Massgrav, The Critics, Merciless Game, SF Hotel Workers Strike, photos from Japan, SoCal & the Bay Area.

#260/Jan '05. Technocracy, The Total End, Only Crime, True North, Partisans, For The Worst, Dick Spikie, Straight to Hell, Black Cross, Action, Ergs, Rusty Nails, Queer Activism in London, Greg Shaw tribute, John Peel tribute, "Andrew "Stig" Sewell tribute, Beijing punk photos.

#261/Feb '05. Year End Top Tens, Riistetyt, Lost Cherrees, Complete Control, Cheap Sex, Gasoline Please, Beerzone, Greyskull, MOTO, Water Into Beer Fanzine, Swe-Punk scumpit, Japan punk photos, Bay Area punk photos, Texas, Russia, and Malaysia scene reports.

262/March '05. Kärnvapen Attack, Neo Boys, Catholic Boys, Dead Moon, Wreckage, Frantix, Armitage Shanks, Wendy Kroys, To What End?, Cell Block 5, Bent Outta Shape, Ah-Nah Tron, Slovakia, Indonesia, and Illinois scene report

263/April '05. All Crusties Spending Loud Night 2004, Bombenalarm, Battleship, APA, The Black Lips, Words That Burn, Flamingo 50, The Low Budgets, Mellakka, I Object, Antisect, Bay Area scene report, South Coast UK scene report.

264/May '05. Crime, Love Songs, Bruce Banner, Intent, The Holy Mountain, Have Heart, The Bill Bondsmen, The Real Losers, archive photos, Bay Area scene photos, Taiwan and Rochester scene reports.

265/June '05. Endless Nightmare, Hard Skin, Kolokol, Amebix, Transistor Transistor, The Safes, The Detonators, Finland scene report, France scene report, SoCal scene report.

266/July '05. The Carbonas, MDC, Destrux, Unkind, Hiretsukan, Giant Haystacks, Ohuzaru, Teenage Harlets, Michigan scene report, San Diego scene report, Eugene, OR scene report, photos.

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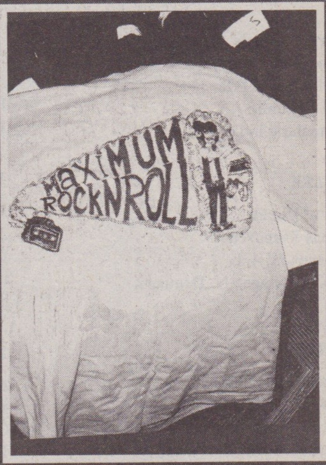

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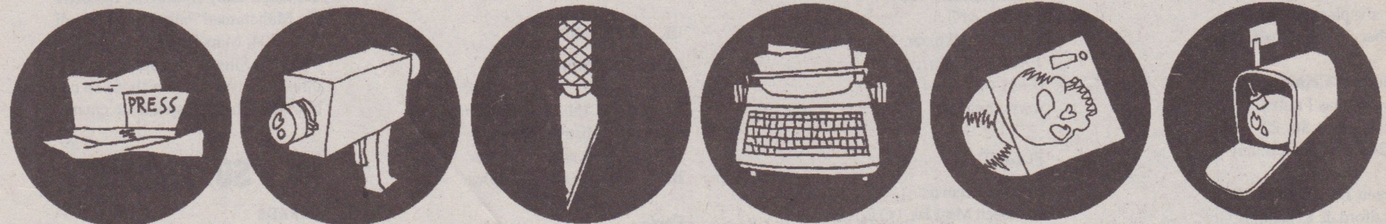

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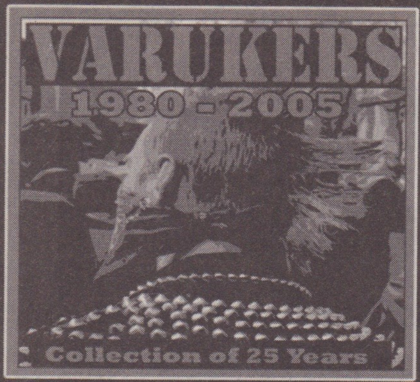

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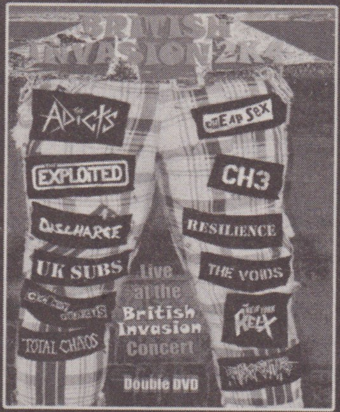

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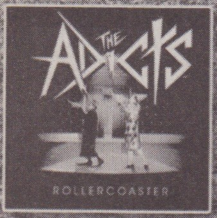

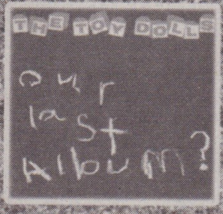

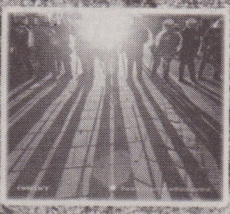

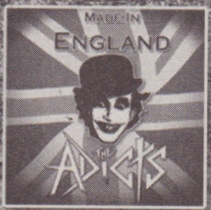

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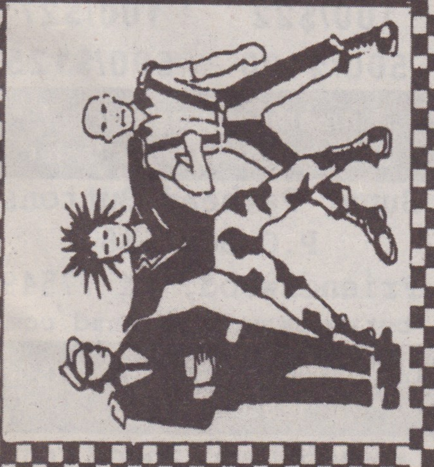

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Yo! Maxi Rocker—

I don't have too much to write about in this letter because I haven't really been getting into much trouble lately. So I just thought I'd write about what life is typically like with my band the HATEFUCKS, which you'll never see play because we go through more drummers than Spinal Tap. So here we go fucko!

A few weeks previous I was at an Agnostic Front gig where I ran into a familiar face from the mid-90s Las Vegas punk rock scene. It was Punk Rock Mike of Keep On Trucking. He was happy to see me and I was happy to see him, but I became even happier when he informed me that he now plays drums. I told him that I'm in a hardcore punk band that plays 30-second songs about killing people, and we need a drummer big time.

I gave him my number and didn't expect him to call me back because he is a drummer and most drummers are flakes or they are just plain crazy, with the exception being Kevin from the Fixtures. Two days later I got a call from Punk Rock Mike saying he was interested in playing with us, but he has to go to court in a few days and that he doesn't know if they are gonna throw the book at him and lock him up. I drank a dozen beers while talking to him on the phone and he polished off a couple of Mickey's 40-ouncers. Just talking to him for that one day brought back some great memories of punk rock's past glories of humping 16-year-old girls with Chubbies or Cub T-shirts and playing at the Elks Lodge. In my defense I am still humping that same 16-year-old girl on a nightly basis. Even though she is over the hill and just passing the mid-20's threshold, I'm still very much in love with the Bethanator. I was kind of bummed after our conversation because here was a guy I totally hit it off with and was disappointed in the thought of not getting a chance to play music with him. Three days later I got home from work and I see there is a message on my answering machine. When I played the message it was Punk Rock Mike. He said that he was now out of jail, and that he is so hard-core he will have to spend the next few weekends in jail, but will be out during weekdays for maximum punk rock action. I immediately called Punk Rock Mike back and asked if he was free to jam sometime in the week. I explained to him that our sound is a cross between the early Ramones and *Reign In Blood*-era Slayer and that we play really fucking fast. Mike thought that it sounded cool and that he'd want to give us a shot. Later that week, on the way to band practice, we agreed to stop by 7-11 where I purchased four tall cans of Coors Light. I handed one to Punk Rock Mike and said to him, "I hope you don't have a problem with drunken driving." I kept the other three 24-ounce cans for my own intoxication purposes.

When I started my car the pop hits of Hot Water Music filled my car and made me happy, so I cracked open one of my ice-cold beers and took a big gulp. I sat for a second in my car and recollected about a time when I once drank two tall cans of Bud Ice on my 10-minute trip to band practice. This being Coors Light, which is my all time favorite beer, I thought I would have no problem killing three of these babies in 10 minutes. Before I backed my car out of my parking space I positioned all of my beers for easy access. I looked to my left hand side and noticed a cop sitting in his car next to mine, I took one last big gulp and thought to myself, "Fuck you pig," then backed my car out and darted into traffic on Las Vegas Blvd. Hell yeah, punk rock... breaking the law! By the time I drove for two or three minutes, or the time equivalent of a Hot Water Music tune to be over, I polished off my first beer. I still had seven or so minutes to finish the other two, so I thought this would be easy, but I was wrong. When I was about half way through the second beer, bubbles started to come back up my throat, but I thought I could still do it, so I tried to push the bubbles down with more beer, but it didn't work. I was getting closer and closer to the practice pad and this beer wasn't even close to being finished, fuck there was no record to be broken tonight.

When I pulled up in front of where we practiced I just barley finished the second beer, so to redeem myself I collected up all my gear and polished off the third beer before I got to the door. When I got to the door I was greeted by Danny Hatefuck, who had bad news. He said, "I got bad news dude! We got no beer, I have no money, and we need beer ASAP." The singer of my band Kendal and I agreed to go to 7-11 and get another case of Coors Light. At this time I was starting to feel the buzz coming on. As Mike was setting up his drum set we dug into the case of beer. Danny was chasing a shot of Jim Bean with each beer, and was in fine form before we even got started. When it was time for band practice to start I was as drunk as I usually am at the end of band practice, which is bad because unlike most musicians I think I actually play much better when I'm sober.

Most of band practice this night was a blur of punk rock action, we went through all our classics nobody besides us has ever heard or cares about, but that's besides the point—fuck them all! We decide to repeat jam-

ming on our hit single called "Fast Song" so Punk Rock Mike could learn at least one song tonight. (For those that are curious, the smash hit "Fast Song" is called "Fast Song" for the simple fact that it is a fast song, kind of like that short song the Dead Kennedys have that's called "Short Songs.") At some point during band practice Punk Rock Mike asked us if we do drugs or if we nowhere to get any, we told him we don't do drugs. Kendal being the only straight edge member of the band said something lame along the lines of drugs being only for losers. Danny Hatefuck says to Punk Rock Mike, "If you really want some drugs I have a methadone tablet left over from my ex roommate." Punk Rock Mike says he would love to have it. I go to the bathroom and unleash several beer cans worth of urine into the toilet and feel better. Thinking back on this warm flow of urine, it might have even been better than some of the orgasms I've had in the past. When I got back from the toilet it was just in time to see Punk Rock Mike washing down the methadone with a healthy helping of beer. We jammed through a few more songs and then Gavin showed up to hang out. At this point we decided to call it quits and we all helped carry the equipment outside. When we're outside we do what we usually do at the end of each band practice, we drink up the last of the beer and chit-chat about punk rock topics. I tell every body about the record store I'd like to open that doesn't sell anything, but is filled with records that aren't for sale. I also tell people about how once my book gets published I'm gonna be eating lunch at Spago's every day and I'll be drunk before 3 p.m. on a daily basis. At one point Danny Hatefuck leans on his jeep and the fucking thing starts to slightly roll down the drive way. We somehow manage to talk Danny into letting his jeep roll all the way down the drive way and see where it stops. When the jeep rolls down the drive way, we get very excited until it stops right in the middle of the street, where it remained for a few minutes. We then somehow manage to talk Danny into pulling his jeep back into the drive way, but this time letting us push the jeep as it rolls down the driveway and see if we can push it through the chain link fence across the street. When we push the jeep it flies down the driveway, and we push it across the street with complete ease. T he only thing stopping us from knocking the fence over is the wimpy incline in front of the fence, but that ain't shit, or so we think. As we push the jeep up the incline we all feel the jeep slow down, but we know we still got momentum on our side so we keep pushing closer and closer to the fence. We did manage to get the jeep to finally touch the fence but at the speed it was going (less than one mile per hour) it didn't even leave a mark. As soon as the jeep "touched" the fence it slowly rolled in the opposite direction and went down the inclined and came to a stop in the middle of the road. All of our dreams of punk rock glory came to a grinding halt; we would not be reenacting the Circle Jerks classic *Wild in the Streets* tonight. At this point we all agreed to take off. Me being the failed rock star that I am I did not go straight home, I agreed to drink more beer and check out some lame-ass psychobilly gig with Gavin at the House of Brews, which sucked, but that's another story that's not worth even telling. There you have it, a typical night of band practice for Karl Bakla.

I'd like to give out a big thanks to Mike from Detroit for contacting me and hanging out with me on his recent trip to Las Vegas. I really appreciate the compilation of Detroit bands he made for me. I wasn't able to hang out as much as I would have liked but we did get to catch some crappy band on Relapse called High On Fire at the Cooler Lounge. I will admit the High On Fire CD is kick ass though. I'm digging the band Goddamn right now. The Balomai Brothers from Ohio sent me their awesome demo and I'm rocking to it non-stop. Also, in my next letter I might have a short interview with Debra from the False Prophets. Don't remember them? Well you suck, poser! Next time I'll tell you about the Nazis we got into a fight with at the Mandalay Bay. Bethany wants me to include that the Boss Martians kicked ass last night at the Double Down, but in the drunken state she was in when she came stumbling home, I'd imagine any band would appear to be good. I'd like to thank all the cool people who have contacted me because of my retarded letters in *MRR* for keeping my faith in punk intact. If you are gonna be in Las Vegas and want to hang out and get drunk with the Hatefucks, let me know. If you'd like to swap compilation cassettes or CDs, get in touch. Last but not least, I saw a video of the Quickening from Ohio play and it was awesome. Also I'm starting an index of vulgarity; if you know a bad word I may not know, or an offensive one-liner, let me know.

Your Proud Member of the Punk Elite,
—Karl Bakla
Lasvegashardcore@aol.com

MRR—

Hi, Daveo here. I just picked up the *MRR* June issue (#265) and I'm reading a scene report that Renae Bryant wrote on Southern California It was very good; props to her. Well, there are a lot of up-and-coming, and some old skool bands here in OC, and clubs as well as new lables that she did not mention.

Bands: CELL BLOCK 5, THE PILLZ, THE BONZOS, DOUBLE ZERO, SCARLET FEVER, THE CRIME (O.C.), CHINA WHITE, THE CROWD, THE STITCHES, BROKEN BOTTLES, CURB, NASTY SCARPER, SIDEKICK, JFA *[? –ed.]*,THE JOHNS, SHATTER FAITH, EL CENTRO, THEE INDIGENTS, SMUT PEDDLERS, THROW RAG, DRAIN BRAMAGE, THE SPOOKY, CH3, FIRE CRACKER 500, BLOCKAGE, UNIT F, DI, NIP DRIVERS, THE NIPPLES, MAD PARADE, THE MISFORTUNES, THE CODEPENDENTS.

Clubs: The Briggs (punk club rules—HB), Jimmy's Nascar (punk shows on Sat.—Anahiem), Lampost Pizza (All ages—Anahiem), Surf City Saloon (HB), The Tropics (Anahiem)

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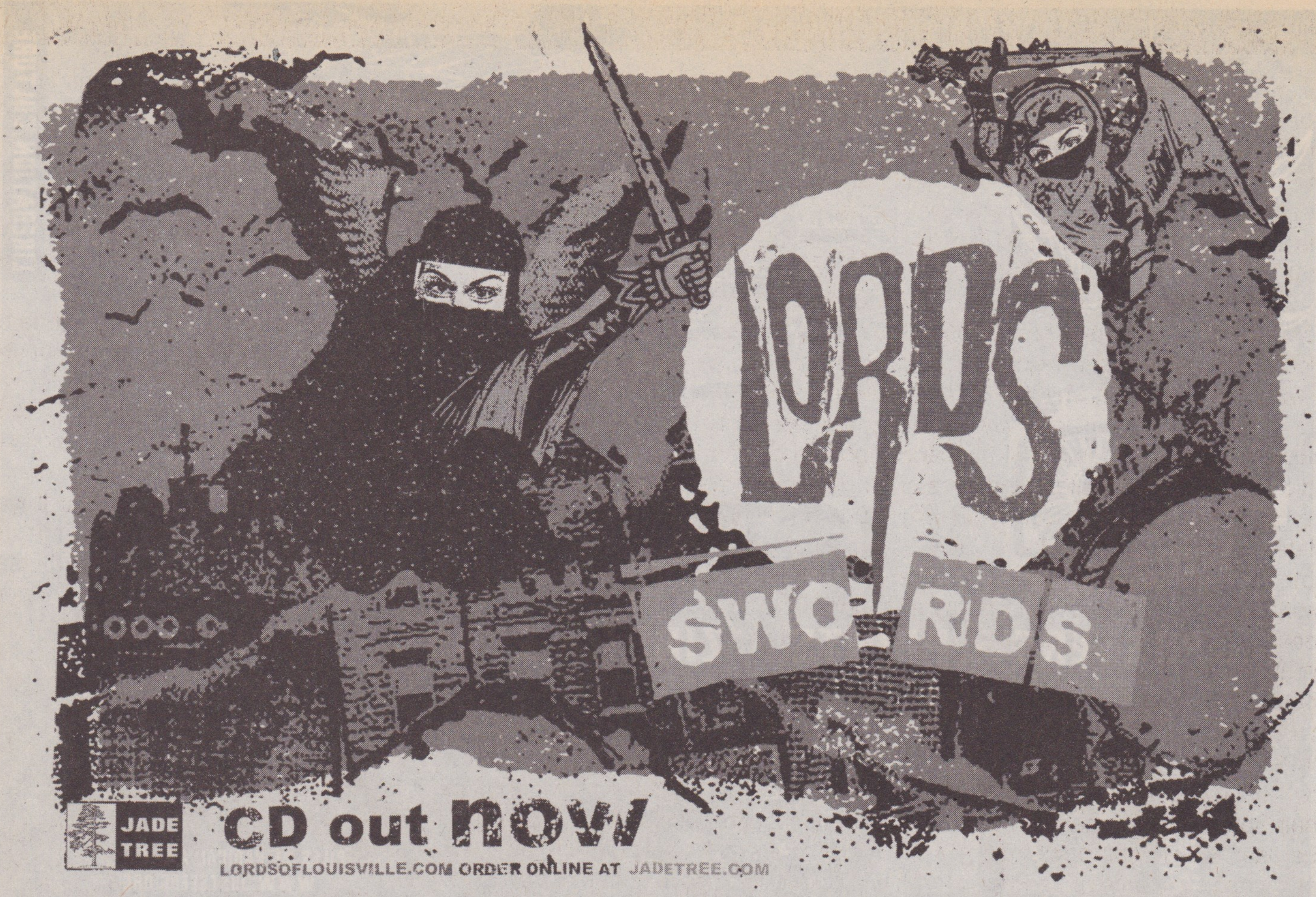
—Thanks,
Daveo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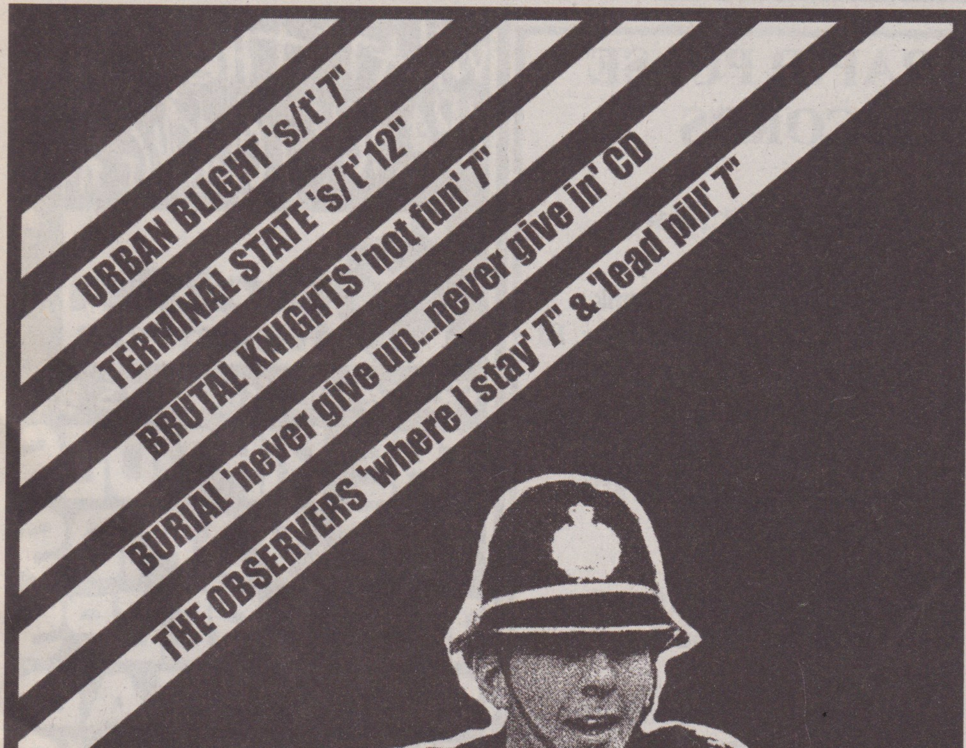
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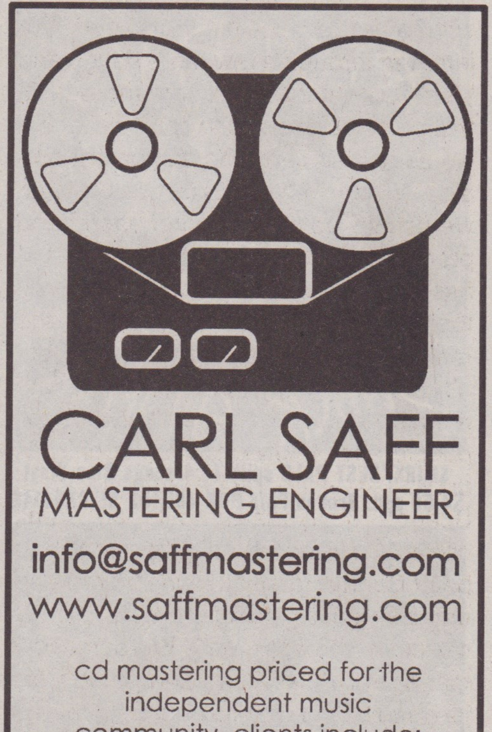
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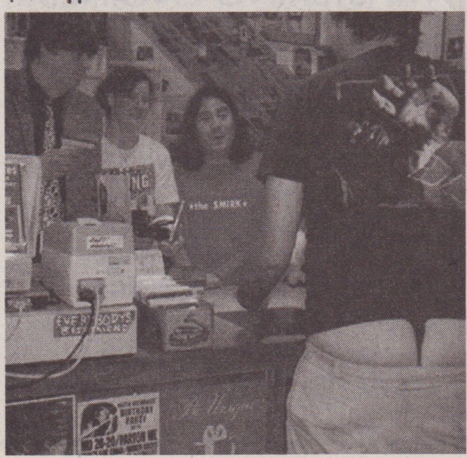

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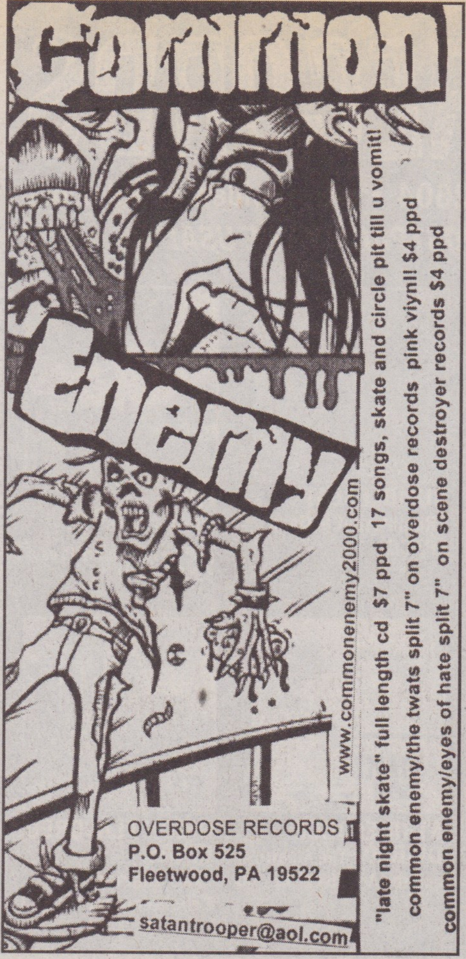

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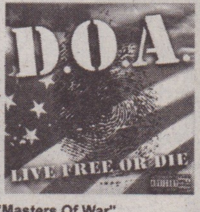

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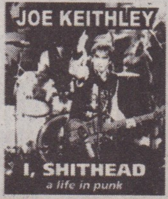

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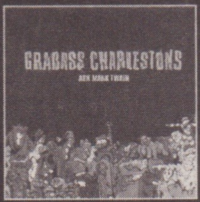

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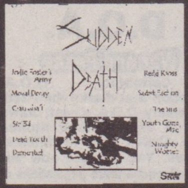

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COLUMNS

Oh No, It's Apocolypse Summer!

Somebody painted, "Have Faith in Christ Alone" on the outside of the apartment building that faces my window. One morning I woke up, made some coffee, and pinned up the blackout sheets I made to diminish the light and diffuse the heat of the real world. I was on the top of my black fake leather 80s couch, a hand-me-down through many friends, a score I waited three years for but have debated disposing of every day since. I was balancing on the top of the couch, pinning up the curtains, and I saw some teenagers spray-painting a mural. It depicted a guy with binoculars and a toucan relaxing together in the tropics. "Art is good, street art is good." I said to my housemate, while I agreed with her that the thing is ugly. It wasn't until the afternoon when it said "Jesus Saves!" and the aforementioned, "Have Faith in Christ Alone!" that I had to admit that, duh, of course, all art is not good art.

That night I was drinking with old friends who lived together at Mission records right before it imploded, friends who would understand the travesty of having to look through your window and see enormous, hideously-constructed Christian propaganda to the right and the church that commissioned it to the left. "I am surrounded by organized religion and my own disorganized bookshelves," I tell Buzz and DoubleEars. They nod knowingly and hand me a PBR.

These are the sort of friends you get into trouble with. We have all had impulsive tattoo experiences together on different occasions. Once, a couple of years ago, Buzz and I were having a hard day and we got walk-in tattoos. Mine was a banner, his was an anchor. Later on that day, he looked at the lubed-up tattoo on his forearm and said, "What the fuck have I done with my life?"

It was May when my old friend, Amy Moon, brought a caravan of Southern punks to town and they forced us all to that rock-bottom level of debauchery that out-of-towners can conjure in the locals during a California summer. "It's the summer of '88!" Buzz declared, and they got an inflatable pool for behind the record store. The crusties and the junkies and the peace-punk college girls came together as they sunned themselves and drank Sparks and Tecate. Everyone was feeling young and hot and wild. Our imperfections were on display and our bad behaviors were on the table. The sense of abandon was so persuasive that many of my friends went crazy and gave each other reasonably large stick and poke "Summer of '88" and "Mission Records" tattoos. Jake got his on his hand cuz the girl who was doing it was cute.

Soon after that night, one that I missed, I tried to give Double Ears a chicken tattoo higher up on the same leg as the Mission Records tattoo. All we got to was the head of the chicken. "That fucking hurts, Kat!" She yelled at me a few times before we gave up. I had just read *We Got the Neutron Bomb.* "Hey, I know, just tell everyone it's a Germs circle!" I said, trying to make the best out of the situation. "No, it's a chicken!" she said, brazenly, "*This* is a *tattoo* of a *chicken.*" "But, Ears, it's just a circle. Tell everyone it's a Germs tattoo! That's punk!" "No, it looks like an egg, so it's a chicken." she insisted, and we dropped the subject.

So it was a Saturday night a couple of weeks ago, and I was drinking whiskey with Buzz and Double Ears on my back porch, and we were looking at the new Jesus mural. "Man, what am I gonna do about this?" I asked them. Should I just make it read, "No church, no state? I think that would be pretty satisfying." I think they thought that was pretty corny. It was, but what the fuck? How do you deal with a situation like that, and not just growl at it as you are trying to write, garden, and get drunk with your friends? What summer is it now that there is Christian propaganda outside my window in SF? It's hot; the bombs are dropping; crazy white men are shooting people outside the borders to the south; my governor, an immigrant, is championing their actions; no more filibuster; no more water; no more California, it's: APOCOLPYSE SUMMER!

So punks everywhere, give each other stupid tattoos, but use clean needles and fresh ink in a clean cup.

Sticks 'n' Dicks

I was seven years old when I first discovered *it.* It was summertime, probably July. I had spent most of the day, like most of my days, exploring the woods behind my house for animals to imprison in my dank lair of aquariums and chicken wire cages. My

lair was located in family's basement, and resembled the cover of a Dropdead record from the mid-90s. I was by myself because none of the neighborhood kids had any interest in finding salamanders when they could be ghost-riding my bike down a hill and into a pond. That is, until I found *it*. Tucked under a log in the middle of a clearing was probably the best evidence of God I have ever come across: *woods porn*.

If you are male, I have a feeling I don't need to really explain what I mean by "woods porn." Almost every time I bring up the subject, any and every female in the vicinity scrunches up their eyebrows in confusion at the ensuing conversation about our "first time" finding *it*. It doesn't matter if you live in a city; woods porn can be found under any manner of shrubbery or overgrowth. The point of woods porn is that it is found outside the realm of domestication; it is wild and untamed. Rarely, though, do I hear of girls finding porn in the woods. It's not unheard of, but certainly uncommon.

Woods porn is a rite of passage for boys ranging from ages five to eight. It is as integral to one's childhood as is learning to ride a bike or buying your first punk record. Everyone remembers each vividly. My first bike was a black and white Huffy. My first punk record was the DisSucks 7" on Beer City Records. My first woods porn was a 1983 issue of *Playboy*—February I believe.

There are many species of woods porn, but the most common are *Playboy*, *Penthouse*, and *Hustler*. Keep in mind that certain species fluctuate in prevalence as the years go by. These are simply the most common of my generation. Years before I was hatched unto this earth, *Easy Rider* was perhaps the most easy to come by in the woods. But generally, if you are male and you walk into any wooded area, your chances are very good of finding either whole magazines or at least torn out pages. A friend of mine, while on a canoe trip with his Boy Scout troop, encountered a suitcase full of porn floating towards them. An aquatic species such as this is an exquisite find and happens only once in a lifetime.

But one cannot simply walk into the woods searching for porn. I learned this well as soon as I hit puberty. Any attempt to seek out woods porn in its hiding place seems to scare it away. You have to let the woods porn find *you*. Patience, as they say, is a virtue.

But then the question becomes, "what do we do with this porn? This porno from the woods?" Unfortunately, many fine specimens of woods porn fall victim to the prepubescent obsession with fire. This is what became of my first encounter. I rounded up everyone I could find that day to show them my discovery. We all stood around the magazine for quite some time, speechless, wondering what manner of beast this was before us and how it got there. Occasionally someone would poke it with a stick or kick it over. Its pages folded open and revealed to us even more questions than answers. Young Danny went running off into the woods, screaming. When we found him, he was at the bottom of a ravine in the fetal position, mumbling something about "hair down there." We left him there, and the last I heard of him he had joined some sort of abstinence cult in Appalachia.

We all returned to ground zero and started discussing what to do with it. We all decided that it should be burnt because these pages were undoubtedly soaked with cooties (why else would the pages be stuck together?) and because fire is so fucking cool. We dug a small pit and filled it with dry leaves. We first set the leaves on fire and carefully placed Susie Scott and her cohorts in the fire with a pair of makeshift tongs fashioned out of tree braches. We all sat around silently as the fire danced and sent charred pieces of breasts and coy grins into the air. It was almost serene until my mother saw the smoke from the house and rushed into the woods with a bucket of water to extinguish the fire. When she found us sitting around burning porno she scrunched her eyebrows at us in confusion. She looked at me and everyone ran in different directions, leaving me to face the wrath alone.

"Is this your father's?" she asked. I would find out later (that week) that Dad had quite an extensive porno collection hidden throughout the house.

"N-no."

"Where did you get it??"

"I found it."

"No one just finds porn in the woods!"

But she couldn't be more wrong. Over the years I would find dozens more. One time I climbed to the top of a pine tree only to find a grocery bag full of *Hustlers*. No one really knows how woods porn escapes domestication. Perhaps it is hobo boner fuel or simply erogenous debris of the meek and ashamed. When I first started dating, I remember taking my own collection and dumping it in the woods for a new generation to stumble upon and set afire in a fit of awe and pre-pubescent terror.

But for all my nostalgia for woods porn, I will say that, in a way, finding woods porn destroys a part of one's childhood. Once it's found, you spend most of your time in the woods trying to find it instead of building forts. And you use your existing forts as sanctuaries for these forgotten erotic relics. Regardless, the next time you decide to get rid of your porno, don't simply throw it in the trash or the gutter. Release it into the wild and give some poor child, age five to eight, the gift of a lifetime: woods porn.

"Don't you love the music?" asks my 74-year-old stepdad, Nick, as we stroll along some really scary street in the west valley of Phoenix after sunset. "I love this music!"

I look at my Nick, and his little white snowball of a Maltese, Yeti, who is tugging on her leash to get the hell out of whatever fucking neighborhood we're in. The music that's blaring

sounds like Mexican Polka, and the only ones who seem to be enjoying the tunes are the huge-ass dogs behind the chainlink fences who keep showing us their teeth.

I point this fact out to Nick and he explains that they're just smiling.

We finally make it to a main street, Grant Avenue, to be exact, as we'd just parked the car and are on our way to a "fashion show" at an art gallery. 4 White Walls.

As we make our way toward the well-lit store front/artist's space/art gallery, we meet a guy named Jeff, who seems to be moving in next door to 4 White Walls. He's got a huge sign up that says "Cookie Florist," and when we ask him about it, he tells us he's moving his already successful place from 7th and Weldon to here. He says this area is the next Mill Avenue. Kinda like the 8th Street Of New York. Or the Haight. You get the picture. As I look around, it seems more like 125th Street and Lexington Avenue to me.

*

Before we had even reached 4 White Walls and the "Carnival/Mardi Gras Inspired Fashion Show," Nick and I had argued in the car about Phoenix being a fashion capital. Nick told me it would never happen, and I explained to him that you never know.

"Fuck you, George," said my step-father, lovingly.

"Look, dickwad," I said as equally lovingly, "LA is already becoming the next fashion capital because New York is dying. It's gonna spread out here. This is the fastest growing place!"

"The only thing that's fastly growing are your dead brain cells," replies Nick, with the sweetest of smiles.

I let that one go. Like I do with lots of Nick's jokes. Especially the ones I don't get. To those, I just say, "Happy New Year!" because once, many years ago, Nick made a New Year's resolution never to tell bad jokes again. My mom had put him up to it. She bet him he couldn't stop. Of course she was right.

***

Once inside 4 White Walls, we meet up with Gary and Sheila, the owners of the place, and find them to be very cool. Gary tells us he just had a hardcore punk rock show the night before and it was a blast. He says that while the kids slammed around like crazy, they were the most polite young people he's ever met.

I tell him that's the punk rock.

And he should know. He's an old punk.

Now Gary was having a fashion show. He tells us he's also a photographer, and we see some pretty cool photos on the wall. We're then told about the darkroom in the back, then it's on to his rivals. People who use acrylics and oils.

Of painters, Gary had this to say: "The state of painting is in a serious decline. How many abstracts can you look at before you say, Why?"

Nick and I have a great laugh.

And soon after that, the fashion show begins.

At first, it's all hot chicks in bikinis. I let out an audible sigh of relief, and Nick, a moan of pleasure, as he snaps pictures on his fancy camera. Finally, the real thing, not those fashion magazine paper dolls he's been staring at at my house during my surgical recovery.

Everything looks very neat, and I get really turned on by a bruise on some model's leg. It just made the thing all the more real, and not some lame event like I've seen too many times at Seventh on Sixth in New York. This was homegrown fashion, and I liked it.

Not no fashion show with Donald Trump's ugly daughter.

And I especially like the hair, done by some dude named Sean from Swanx Hair Lounge, who kept telling me he he'd been in *New Times*, a paper I was writing for, twice already, because of some fight with the local sheriff. I told him I just started at the paper, but that was cool, although I didn't see anything wrong with Sheriff Joe. There is nothing wrong with good law enforcement, and I'm just disappointed the guy can't make the trains run on time and doesn't have a funny little mustache. Of course I then realized that Phoenix has no trains. Yet.

But it does have a guy who can make women's hair look like giant beehives or soft pretzels. So that's gotta count for something.

***

Later I asked some of the designers if they, like me, believed this could be the next fashion capital. Susan Di Staulo, the main organizer, while giving me some positive words, did point out that it was unlikely in the near future as, "out here there's only white trash and rich white trash."

But she did cover her ass in numerous follow-up emails and stuff, telling me that Phoenix "does have an inner growing strength, but there had to be intellectual growth here as well."

Amen to that.

Where's my Pabst Blue Ribbon?

Lacie Murphy, a designer of clothes for all shapes of women, thinks that if Phoenix were to realize the world around it, it might happen one day.

Anna, from Devious Wigs, thinks it will totally happen because this place is so fast-growing and lots of world cultures are moving into town.

But it was Sommer Christine's attitude I liked the best. After giving me her card, which has umlauts over the "o" (which Nick tells me she has a fine pair of), Sommer says, "If there's a heart and a will, then anything can happen."

And she really, really means it.

So I tell her I love her.

Then Nick and I just can't help but smile.

All the way back to the car.

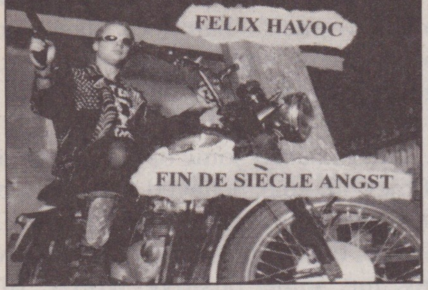
Mexican Polka, bared fangs, a terrified Maltese, and all.

Take My Life, Please.

***

1. Actually looks like I won't be in Phoenix much longer. Things have taken a turn for the ugly, and my health just can't handle it. Plus, I'm tired of the toothless rednecks—my in-laws.
2. www.georgetabb.com for all your information needs and to email me.
3. It is great seeing all these old punk rock and hardcore bands get back

together and blast out some tunes. It gives me a chance to mix my Geritol with my Jack Daniels!



The Fall of the Compact Disc

If you have followed my columns in fanzines over the years you will know of my disdain for the compact disc format. I have always been a champion of vinyl for a number of reasons. I've always felt that the CD was an inferior format forced onto the public by the industry and never fully adopted by the core of the punk scene. Despite this, I have made several compromises over the years with CD culture. I have recognized the utility of the CD for compiling discographies of out print works and accepted the popularity of CDs in places like SE Asia, where vinyl culture never really took root. However, I never felt that the CD would last. I predicted many times in the past that it would eventually suffer the same fate as the 8-track, quad, or wax cylinder, cast aside by the industry and rejected by the public. And with the popularity of digital music files and now MP3 players, I think we can see the end of the compact disc era on the horizon.

The CD was essentially forced onto the public by the industry. No one was really clamoring for an end to the vinyl format. A few gadget geeks embraced the CD early on in the mid 80s, but there was never conclusive proof that the sound quality was any better than vinyl. Furthermore, early CDs proved to be very susceptible to oxidization, leading to corrosion and skipping and certainly scratched as easily, if not more so than vinyl. As a result, a lot of audiophiles held on to their vinyl. Record collecting culture hasn't changed much since the advent of CD. The same core of collectors is still avidly trading and collecting vinyl and generally look on CDs with disdain as a cheap consumer format with no value. The core of the punk and hardcore scene has also rejected the CD, as has underground hip-hop, indie rock, and other sub genres. In fact, vinyl sales are up from what they were ten years ago, even though the rest of the industry has been in a long slump. Likewise, after an initial round of consolidation, record pressing plants are busier now than ever and several have recently expanded.

At the core of the vinyl/CD debate remains the inherent value placed on the format by the user. Vinyl records were the standard format at the start of the hardcore punk scene and remain highly valued as original artifacts of this era. CDs came along right about the same time the first wave of hardcore was going into decline and will probably always be regarded with derision by the most dedicated hardcore punk fans. While rare vinyl continues to grow in collectability and rise in price, CDs have never really been fetishized by collectors to the point where CDs demand high prices in collector circles or are traded by collectors for equally scarce CDs, regardless of any relative scarcity. The fact that now anyone can make CDs in their own home (as has always been the case with cassette tapes) has further diminished their relative value. In fact, the low value placed on semi-obsolete formats like floppy disks and cassettes, despite their continued utility, is a good indicator of the future status of CDs. Any item ultimately has only as much value as people assign it, be it gold, water, or a music format. And I think we are soon reaching a point where the majority of consumers no longer feel that CDs are something worth paying full price for. That is to say, they are losing the battle to retain value in the same way cassettes and 8-tracks did in years past. To visualize my point, imagine if you went to a music store tomorrow and they had put out cassette versions of all the new releases at the same price as the LP and CD versions. Despite the content being identical on all three formats, most people would find it laughable to pay $9.99 for a cassette but would probably not object to that price for an LP and wouldn't think it too unusual for a CD. If we look several years into the future we can still see the vinyl format commanding value and respect, but the CD will probably be scoffed at in the same manner as the cassette is today. In fact, in my distro on tour, I sell more cassettes than CDs. This demonstrates that to people who are only interested in the content, they would prefer the cheaper cassette format to the same content on the more expensive CD.

With a very large segment of the public the value battle for CDs is already lost. One of the most commonly heard phrases in the CD section of a record store these days is, "Don't buy that, I'll burn it for you." Furthermore, especially in the mainstream, most of the music is of such low quality that there are few album-length releases anyone can justify paying full price for. Most people would prefer to download or copy the one or two hit songs off an album than to purchase the whole thing for just one good song. In fact, I would argue that a good 60-75% of the population has already rejected the CD in favor of downloading or vinyl. At the very least most people buy CDs only very selectively. I would hazard to guess that the last group of people still avidly collecting CDs are in fact the least sophisticated of consumers. I picture most CD sales today being parents buying gift items for their kids, technophobic baby boomers, and twelve-year olds in the music section at Walmart.

Music retail has been struggling along with the rest of the industry over the last decade, and especially in the last five years. Many mainstream chains, as well as independent stores have closed down in recent years. Those that remain often struggle with bankruptcy. Indeed, for most retail chains CDs are a "loss leader." Corporate chains like Best Buy don't actually make any money off the CDs they sell. They recoup the costs of the CD section from advertising payouts by record companies. The flashy displays on the end caps of the aisles in these stores and the posters in the windows are actually the only part of the music section that generates income for these chains. Likewise, mall retail

chains like Sam Goody or Musicland have always received "co-op" payments from record labels. In the past, these payments were used to advertise new releases in local media and to run promotions. These days, however, they are mainly used as a direct subsidy to the retailers just to pay the rent and overhead.

The music industry moved to CD over vinyl for the lower manufacturing and shipping costs the new format offered. Ultimately, the industry will go all digital, and eliminate the costs of manufacturing, distribution, and retail altogether. I imagine the turning point will be a new digital file format that is encrypted and copy protected that you would have to pay to download. Some technology analysts have predicted such a format would also possibly include video or be introduced in conjunction with a broadband video-on-demand platform. While such leaps in technology seem a little far off, they are probably not as far off as we think. Look how fast the industry managed to push CD and DVD down the consumers' throats. I predict that such a shift will also entail artists and music corporations looking for other sources of revenue to replace CD sales. Higher ticket prices, product placement in videos, and more "merch" like shirts and accessories are likely choices.

The one factor that I think points the most towards the fall of the CD is the rise of the Ipod and other MP3 players. Seems like everywhere I go these days I see more people with little white earplugs using these gadgets. As this technology advances and becomes more affordable, these devices will become ubiquitous and eventually lead to the downfall of the compact disc. Already there are a lot of people who have ripped all their CDs to their computers and sold off their CDs to help underwrite the cost of their IPOD. I predict this will continue into the future, much the same way baby boomers flooded the market with terrible 70s records when the CD first took off.

What does this mean for the hardcore scene? I think the labels hit hardest by this will be the mall punk and amazingcore labels that have gone CD only. Look for these labels to be some of the first to move to an all-digital platform. Also, I would expect the trend of commercialization to continue with bands selling more and more clothing and accessories. For underground DIY punk things will continue as they always have, great bands will put out vinyl releases that will be sought after by fans and collectors for years to come. In fact, I predict record collecting will continue to grow in popularity as CD wanes. The move to an all-digital scheme might actually benefit DIY hardcore greatly by reducing the "clutter" in stores and distros of CD-only releases. With the exception of a few discography type releases, most bands that didn't pass the sniff test for vinyl probably aren't going to be remembered in a few years anyway. Pushing this segment of the scene to Myspace would have positive results. It would free up space and capital in stores and distros for vinyl releases. People into this kind of stuff could "check out my bands MP3s" and the rest of us can continue to follow the music scene unhindered.

I can't say with certainty when the CD era will come to an end, but in the next five or ten years I expect it to go the way of the 8-track, or more appropriately the cassette or floppy disk. For sure CD will continue to have it's adherents, just as many of us continue to champion vinyl, but eventually there will be a shift in people's attitudes about the relative value of the CD and the industry as we know it, will cease to exist.

No.

What does it mean to be an America Hater?

A week ago I was visiting the crowded environs of the Monterey Bay Aquarium with my girlfriend Kairsten and her parents. We were walking through the section with all the deep-sea jellyfish, and as with the other deep-sea creature exhibits there were signs posted (albeit somewhat obscurely) instructing people to not use flash photography, for it could physically harm these weird beasties that have no natural tolerance for light. Kairsten and I noticed a six or seven-year-old kid who was taking a ton of flash pictures right up against the glass, as the jellyfish tried futilely to jettison away from the (I assume) painfully bright light. As somewhat environmentally conscious people, we commented, quietly and to ourselves, that this was a bit lame and couldn't possibly be doing the jellyfish any good.

A woman who was standing right next to us overheard and immediately yelled, "What the hell is the matter with you people? He's just a kid! Leave him alone!" Taken aback, we said we were just talking to ourselves about how we had been told a few minutes earlier by a docent at the octopus exhibit just how bad this was for the animals, as we watched numerous other people doing the same thing—the octopus ended up hiding beneath a rock for the entire time the museum was open that day as a result. The lady immediately shot back with, "All you people are the fucking same! You probably believe in abortion, too."

My jaw was pretty much on the floor at this point, and she shoved me hard in the shoulder as she walked by. Instead of saying "Yes I do in fact *love* abortion, and I'm also a homosexual Jew who thinks these animals evolved to be this way over millions of years and were not simply created by some mythical god in 4004 BC," I just said, "Have a nice day!" turned around to Kairsten and her parents, and mumbled, "I hate America."

Naturally, as Kairsten and her parents are good, sensible people who don't let the petty stupidity of ignorant assholes color their opinion of the large and diverse country they live in, this was met with a quick naysaying session along the lines of, "Oh, you shouldn't say that," "That's the wrong attitude," "Counterproductive, you won't change anything that way." And of course, they are logically right. Yet

all I did was shrug. Something that they (and most of the people around us) could laugh at as a weird public moment of aberration from a random asshole bothered me on a deeper level, and the feeling did not subside nor change in the face of a sensible rebuke.

That lady was a belligerent, willfully ignorant fuck. The thing that gets to me is that, at this point in history, so is a large majority of both houses of the United States Congress, the President and his entire Executive branch, the Supreme Court, the majority of the federal courts, and the governor of the state of California (plus the majority of governors of the other states)—and they are belligerent, willfully ignorant fucks in pretty much the exact same way. Anyone who does not think exactly like them (i.e., a probable majority of the population) is fundamentally disempowered right now. We can organize and protest all we want, but the unfortunate truth is that they have absolutely no reason or pressure on them to listen. Opposition to them is large, and growing all the time, but domestically it has no teeth because by nature it is divisive; it is made up of people who are willing and able to think for themselves. As a consequence, they spend most of their energy arguing over how to deal with important differences while the unified force of belligerent, ignorant fucks is busy destroying any semblance of social progress whatsoever.

I've said it before, and it is a cliché, but this is textbook fascism, and it is made possible by the unique sociocultural and political composition of winner-take-all-style republican democracy as practiced in the United States. To most progressives, the ideal is that people should be able to believe what they want to believe, and that minority voices should be given a chance to participate in their civil society in a proportionate manner. This runs into a brick wall when a large, economically powerful, and highly vocal minority sails to power on the platform of a restrictive, universally applied morality, hyper-stratified economic policy, and a strong will to use violence (or any other means) to accomplish their ends. The "unity" of this minority appeals to frightened people who ultimately just want to "belong" as part of the dominant group, and a plurality ensues. Having seen how fascists get elected quite handily to power, many other world democracies, post-WWII, enacted additional safeguards to make it more difficult for this to happen. The United States did not do this, and has consistently refused to even consider such reforms to our 200-plus-year-old system. That system is simply too entrenched, and the citizenry are, for the most part, unwilling or unable to criticize most of these institutions at their base. For all basic intents and purposes, America today is the end product of this political and social pigheadedness and bluster—especially to almost everyone else in the world who doesn't happen to be an American.

So am I one of those America-Haters that George Bush loves to rail against? I suppose I am, though I really wish I wasn't. This country, for all the good it has and the large number of inspirational, wild, creative, interesting, and/or decent and sensible people here, is stuck on the same shitty, self-destructive path that its fascist (and imperialist) predecessors were stuck on—and as history shows, the only thing that's likely going to change that is for us to eventually be overwhelmed by a combination of internal social/environmental collapse and the sheer number of enemies we make around the globe. In other words, we're probably going to get our asses savagely beaten (possibly over the course of several decades), and only then are we likely to consider national health care, liberalized cultural policy, a socioeconomic safety net, and internationalist/rationally minded foreign policy as realistic possibilities. Then maybe I can stop hating America, and get on to hating whatever country (or extra-national corporate entity) replaces us in the World's #1 Belligerent, Willfully Ignorant Fuck position.

—Johnny Collapse, PO Box 3026, Oakland, CA 94609. johngeek@gmail.com For an archive of old NO columns, check out my Myspace page (I know, I know) at www.myspace. com/noarchive Also, if you wanna get down with the Snorkelpunx this summer or fall and happen to live in Northern California, drop a line to snorkelpunx@gmail.com and we'll keep you abreast of underwater happenings. Word?

Let's see... what's pushing up the outrage-o-meter this month? So many things, so little time. The news this week has been dominated by the revelation that a high-level FBI official, W. Mark Felt, was "Deep Throat," the Watergate-era source who helped a great deal in bringing down the corrupt presidency of Richard Nixon, still the only US president to resign from office. Trying to explain the whole Watergate story would take up a lot more space than I have. I was a teenager when it happened and didn't really grasp the whole meaning or the depths of the coverup of that supposedly minor burglary of Democratic headquarters, but it extended all the way to the White House. Not a pretty time. These times are pretty bad, as well. In fact, one might argue that Bush is worse than Nixon. Nixon was no prize, though, and it was a bit sickening and smacked of revisionist history when he was damn near canonized following his death in 1994. Still, even when I was 13-14, I had at least an understanding of the criminal nature of the Nixon regime.

Felt, now 91, was the primary source for Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein of the *Washington Post*. The story was told in the book and movie *All The President's Men*. I saw that film when it came out in the 70s, but as I said, I was too young to completely absorb it. I saw it again a few years ago and, of course, got a lot more out of it. Even if it was a Hollywood production, there's something to be learned and it whets the appetite to learn more about this

less-than-glorious period of history.

Of course, the right-wing wags are out in full-force, calling Felt a traitor or worse. Pat Buchanan, the former Nixon speechwriter and a loyalist until the end, called him a "snake." G. Gordon Liddy and Chuck Colson, both Watergate criminals who did time for their offenses, have been critical of Felt. *Wall Street Journal* columnist and former presidential speechwriter Peggy Noonan, one of the more bizarre right-wing figures out there, essentially blamed Felt for genocide. That's right...genocide:

"What Mr. Felt helped produce was a weakened president who was a serious president at a serious time. Nixon's ruin led to a cascade of catastrophic events—the crude and humiliating abandonment of Vietnam and the Vietnamese, the rise of a monster named Pol Pot, and millions—millions—killed in his genocide."

Never mind that Nixon engaged in illegal bombing of Cambodia and that that could have had something to do with the rise of Pol Pot. Nope...it's all Felt's fault for ratting out Nixon. Ludicrous...

Felt conjures up mixed feelings, after having heard and read different accounts this week. I'm not sure if I'd call him a hero, but in this case, the ends justified the means. I wasn't familiar with him, to be honest. I had doubts that the source was one of the better known players in the Watergate saga... not Henry Kissinger, not Alexander Haig, not Buchanan. If that were the case, it probably would have been revealed years ago. It's actually kind of amazing that it was kept a secret for over 30 years, although Felt's name was mentioned in some 70s accounts.

Felt didn't always cover himself in glory, and his motives for ratting out Nixon may not have been all that noble. When the longtime, execrable FBI head J. Edgar Hoover died in 1972, Felt was passed over for the job by Nixon for one of Tricky Dick's cronies, Patrick Gray, so revenge certainly could have been a motive here. Felt was also convicted in the late 70s for authorizing illegal surveillance and wiretaps, without warrant, on the Weather Underground. The FBI was notorious for such antics, especially in the 60s and 70s, and Felt was a part of that system. In fact, he was one of the prime movers. Ronald Reagan later pardoned him, by the way. Big shock.

Would this happen today? Would a mainstream newspaper have the gumption to publish such accounts? Or would they be relegated to the blogosphere, to be castigated by the right-wing echo chamber of right wing cable news talking heads and pundits or radio hosts (often the same people—Hannity, O'Reilly, et al). The story has opened up a lot of old wounds and it's causing debate about Vietnam, about the merits of the Nixon administration, etc. In the current media environment, it'd probably be tough to get the word out because the right is so well organized.

It's a fascinating story—but, of course, life goes on. So does death, and Bush's illegal war in Iraq, which was precipitated by an outright lie and, if one believes the so-called Downing Street memo, was planned well ahead of time. That story hasn't been getting nearly as much coverage as Deep Throat or the ongoing atrocities in Iraq. The death toll continues to climb, and for what? It didn't have to happen, and Bush deserves to be impeached. I can't decide on the bigger outrage... the fact that he went to war under false pretenses or the mainstream press's unwillingness to delve further into the story.

The memo was published in early May by the *Sunday Times of London*. *The Nation* magazine says, of this memo, "[it] detailed a secret July 23, 2002, briefing for Prime Minister Tony Blair at 10 Downing Street. As part of this meeting, Richard Dearlove, the head of MI-6 (England's CIA), just back from consultations in Washington, reported that the Bush Administration viewed war with Iraq as inevitable. According to the memo, Dearlove told Blair, 'Bush wanted to remove Saddam, through military action, justified by the conjunction of terrorism and WMD. But the intelligence and facts were being fixed around the policy.'"

This is just as rotten as what Nixon did during his administration. Probably worse. It's certainly worse than Bill Clinton lying about getting oral sex. As others have pointed out, no one died for Clinton's lie, but many have died and suffered for Bush's transgressions.

So the story hasn't been getting a lot of coverage in the mainstream press and it's pooh-poohed by Bush's propagandist, uh, press spokesman, Scott McLellan. But that's not to say that there aren't rumblings or efforts to change that situation. Rep. John Conyers from Michigan has been spearheading these efforts and, along with 88 other members of the House, has drafted a letter to Bush asking for answers. As he says on his website, "the memo casts serious doubt on many of the contentions of the Bush Administration in the lead up to the Iraq war. With over 1,600 US servicemen and servicewomen killed in Iraq, the deaths of hundreds of thousands of Iraqis, and over $200 billion in taxpayer funds going to this war effort, we cannot afford to stand by any longer." He's urging people to sign on to the letter and, while it'll probably be delivered by the time this column is printed, you can still check his site, www.johnconyers.com. I just signed on. Not sure what it'll do, besides getting me on some list of subversives. It's also not likely that Bush could be impeached given the current make-up of the Congress, but mid-term elections are coming up next year. If there are enough questions raised, maybe that can be turned around and there will, perhaps, be an opportunity to drive Bush (and hopefully Cheney, the real power) from office once and for all.

I'm kind of shooting from the hip, here. Engaging in some fantasizing. In reality, I'm not all that optimistic about any impeachment or change of direction in this country anytime soon. The news networks are too busy covering the Michael Jackson trial or the "runaway bride" story or doing puff pieces on whatever reality TV show is hot at the moment. More people probably know the name of the *American Idol* winner than their congressional repre-

sentative. The bottom line, though, is that this really, really sucks. Simple but true! How many soldiers and innocent civilians have died needlessly during this invasion and occupation? It's frustrating that, in the main, so few people fucking *get it*. At least that's my perception.

I know that the approval ratings for Bush and the Republican-controlled Congress are declining and one hopes that an effective opposition can be mounted. Now that the Democrats have compromised over the filibuster and some right-wing wackjobs are being appointed to the federal bench—Priscilla Owen has already been confirmed and the equally extreme Janice Rogers Brown and William Pryor are on the way—things can only get worse. A radical agenda reinforced by a radical judiciary. If I was a religious person, I'd say God help us all!

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All this insanity in "real life." Time to retire to the sanctity of my den/office and blast the stereo. My old Altec speakers still kick ass. Here's what caught my ear this month...

AFTER THE BOMBS - *Terminal Filth Stench Bastard* (Sjakk Matt Plater, 7" EP)

Heavy-duty crusty crossover from Montreal (and a member from Norway), with Janick from HELLBOUND on vocals. Thick, raw production and Janick's voice is buried in a little in the mix but her nasty rasp emerges from the chaos. Four bruisers in an early SACRILEGE (the UK band, not the West Coast one) vein. Fuckin' brutal. (PO Box 7008, 0306 Oslo, NORWAY, afterthebombs@hotmail.com)

ARMISTICE – *Fluff and Stuff: The EPs & the Early Years* (Despotic, LP)

Hard-driving peace punk from the West Coast. The punked-out Pooh and Piglet on the LP label is cute but there's nothing all that cuddly or fluffy about the music. Ravenous Discharge and Scandinavian-inspired hardcore, with varying sound quality but played with raw verve. Recorded between '94 and '98, when this sound wasn't all that "trendy" and, as indicated, from various releases. Three of the songs are unreleased versions. (PO Box 832, Long Beach, CA 90801, www.despotic-records.tk)

BOMB BUILDER – *Deadful Melody* (Gloom, 12" EP)

Life is unfair sometimes...you're probably going to have a hard time getting this record, since it's limited to 120 copies and not supposed to be re-pressed. Ridiculous. These recordings were supposed to come out on a split with Western Mass. band SICK AND TIRED but it never happened, so Gloom has done this 12" pressing. From Cleveland, with various members of NINE SHOCKS TERROR and GORDON SOLIE MOTHERFUCKERS involved (Wedge, Shaun) and it's a full-tilt buzzbomb, as you'd expect from the parties involved. Pile-driving hardcore punk with lots of burn and flail and featuring a wanton cover of the STALIN's "Stop Jap." "Censorshit" takes a raucous mid-tempo turn and if I still were doing my radio show over the airwaves (as opposed to the internet), I'd play it loudly and dedicate it to the motherfucking FCC. Ripping shit...track it down, have someone tape it, but it's worth the effort. (PO Box 14253, Albany, NY 12212, www.gloomrecords.com)

KYKLOOPPIEN SUKUPUUTTO – *Kuuluuko Meidän Todella?* (Tuska & Ahdistus, 7" EP)

From Finland, in case you couldn't tell. The title means "Do We Really Need To," and it's a lament about the ravages of capitalism: "whore politicians owned by leaders," and stating that "the basic rights are not merchandise." Fast hardcore, but with musical complexity and some noise-damaged/off-kilter elements. Crazy-sounding and in a good way. (Kauppapulstikko 32 A 18, 65100 Vaasa, Finland, www.tuskajaahdistus.tk)

RACE AGAINST TIME / REASON OF INSANITY – split (Burrito, 7" EP)

Two ripping bands team up. RACE AGAINST TIME hammers ahead with an almost out-of-control onslaught, but never falls apart, and the riffs are hot and heavy, accompanied by harsh vocals. Includes a cover of BASTARD'S "Cause Of Civilization." REASON OF INSANITY takes the thrash ride with some speed metal licks sprinkled in and keeps up the speedy tempo throughout. Some serious lyrics but also getting silly for "ZZ Thrash," which laments five-dollar beers. (PO Box 3204, Brandon, FL 33509, www.soundideadistribution.com)

KNEE DEEP IN SHIT – *Fucking Destroyed* (Nancy Howard, 7" EP)

Fucking DESTROYER—13 songs of pissed-off hardcore punk done in fully raging fashion and "I Can't Take It (Fuck Music)" is just the opening salvo—the eternal lament of punk turning into some meaningless fashion show instead of an act of rebellion. Hey, even this jaded middle-aged motherfucker is still moved by people who want to make a difference and express it as loudly and aggressively as possible. This will beat your eardrums to a bloody pulp. (Zach Howard, 5726 Sussex Ct, Troy, MI 48098, www.kneedeepinshit.com)

L'AMICO DI MARTUCCI / OHUZARU – *Collection* (Six Two Five, CD)

Two Italian bands with shared members, friends, etc., collected from various 7" splits and comps. L'AMICO DI MARTUCCI has a slightly melodic, early-80s hardcore sound with some youth crew flourishes but no jock-core in sight. A lot of burn with a scorching guitar sound, fast drumming, and shouted vocals. Things don't slow down with OHUZARU, although they have some heavier passages and grind moves. The drumming is a little stiff at times, but the anger comes out loud and clear. L'AMICO is more my style, though. (www.625thrash.com)

MÜTANT (Schizophrenic, 7" EP)

Hyper-core—this Japanese band is maybe a little too hyper at times, although the crazed assault does make an impression. "Disposition Accelerate," in particular, has a walloping breakdown. Wailing and flailing guitars and drums, with high-pitched vocals. Over-the-top? I'd say so. (17 West 4th, Hamilton, ON L9C 3M2, CANADA,

www.schizophrenicrex.com)

SECRET SEVEN - Take It Back (Thrash Steady Syndicate, CD)

Totally ripping hardcore from Singapore—this CD includes their LP and their songs from two split 7″ EPs, plus live video footage. The dancing looks almost polite and there are lots of smiling faces. US and a few Japanese influences ("Nippon E Ai Wo Komete" pays tribute to that country's hardcore), with short/fast/loud songs, occasionally doubling up the speed but not succumbing to grind-itis. Dual vocals (one low, one higher and rabid-sounding) reinforced by a spirited, high-powered blast. (Muhammad Fairuz Bin Taswadi, Blk. 204, Marsiling Drive, #07-208, SINGAPORE 730204, thrashsteadysyndicate.cjb.net)

40 WATTS (demo tape)

Four women from Boston bashing out some furious, tuneful, straight-ahead punk. Six loud, snotty songs and Jen's vocals are sarcastic and cutting-sounding. "Every Time I See You I Throw Up In My Mouth A Little (A Love Song)" is definitely one of the best song titles you'll see all month. A strong debut. (www.purevolume.com/40watts, 40wattpunx@gmail.com)

*****

Al Quint, PO Box 2746, Lynn, MA 01903 suburbanvoice@earthlink.net. Sonic Overload radio: www.sonicoverload.moocowrecords.com

Omens, omens.

I try not to worry over them much, but I can't help but notice. What does it mean when every time you walk outside, a behemoth of a crow (raven?) is waiting, perched above you on a wire? It happened to me a lot in the weeks before I left Oakland. I packed up and came to New York, as planned, and so far nothing sepulchral, nothing Poe-like has happened, at least not that I've noticed. And crows are all right. Intelligent.

No crows here in lower Manhattan, but my relationship with pigeons has become much more familiar. It's like we're actually living together, instead of just close by, which is how New York feels in general. The pigeons flirt on my windowsill in the early morning, and the chicks cry piteously somewhere in nests up on the roof. It's too close to be endearing, just short of maddening. At least, at night, they sleep.

But what's this? The soft click-clack of blood-red fingernails, tapping lightly on the ceiling this sleepless rainy night? No—a ladybug—plump, red, innocent—tap-tapping on the overhead light. Here, on the fifth floor? Oh, erratic city.

I capture the ladybug in Tupperware and with a flick of my index finger, send it flying out the window into the pungent June night. It's a gesture inherited from my father, who is responsible for a two-year infestation of small brown moths in his kitchen, a regrettable combination of laziness and laissez-faire. We reserve our annihilative energy for the parasitic species, my dad and I, and have been known to take being bitten a bit too personally.

Omens are everywhere if you look for them. In New York, everything is everywhere. Or everything is somewhere, at least, and looking, at this point, seems superfluous.

On Sunday, a punk show in Tompkins Square Park reeled me in from blocks away like a hooked fish—not unhappily, but not entirely voluntarily, either. Pulled along by belonging. And then afterward, eating an orange in a community garden on East Seventh, and enjoying it *so much*, thinking, like I sometimes do, about how kids in poor families in the 20s and 30s would get one orange for Christmas, and wondering how that orange tasted. In the garden, small kids are shouting advice as their parents, the gardeners, transfer large goldfish in nets from a kiddie pool to large rock basin which is to be their home. The fish are pretty hard to catch, and everyone is excited.

Now I'm here in my new room—well, my young friend's room I'm borrowing for the summer. With her things around, her posters on the wall. Like the room of a younger self, an outward-moving self. My few things bravely standing on a table in the corner, in plastic crates.

There's a good compromise between sparseness and color here, enough to settle down in.

I understand wanting to be pure, unburdened, clean inside—but I think it's a copout. I think most of the asceticism I've encountered is phony, even fearful. Hedonism, too. That said, I'm seduced by *four bags that you can easily carry, containing all that you need.*

Like everybody's family, my family is weird about things—like collecting, hoarding, bribery, neglect—things buried and disinterred. All of this in the emotional sense. For example, my mother just returned from Naples, where she was born, with a box of her mother's old recipes and photographs. I have one of the snapshots of my grandmother on the wall now, and it's a revelation—she died young before I met her. She is smiling, and dark, almost Middle Eastern in facial structure—but her face holds my face in it, and my mother's, and shares these qualities that ours do not share with each other.

It's good to be somewhere new for summer, which miserable or no, is the best, sexiest season. It feels good, for a change, to feel more human than citizen, less productive and more animal, here in the East Village, on the fifth floor. Because these days, it seems, I've been thinking about my body at a remove, like resigned homeowner casting a critical eye on a fixer-upper.

For example, during my annual cleaning[1], I just sort of casually and theoretically asked my dentist about, you know, cosmetic work. Cosmetic work, how shameful. And my teeth are fine. It's just…

"Oh, we could throw some plastic crowns on those canines," he said cheerfully. "But you and I know you'd just grind them back off in a month or two."

I looked sadly at the photograph of

cherubic young raccoons that was taped to the ceiling. At least this time he didn't ask, wasn't I sleeping with someone, who could help monitor my nighttime grinding?

"You know," he added, more gently, "Some people think that having perfectly even teeth is really the ideal." This did not comfort me. For at this mile marker in the lifelong journey of self-appreciation, I no longer care to look like anyone but myself. It is imperative, though, to look as much like myself as possible. And I miss the San Franciscan topography of my bite, which is now Great Plains-like. I have found myself coveting expressive gaps, menacing canines, buck teeth.

On to the eyes, portals to the soul. I got the flyer at school: "Lasik surgery—50 percent off!" I had to at least look into it, right? I have school insurance, but only for a year. Unlike my teeth, I like my glasses, but I'm not crazy about *needing* them. What about the way they fly off in the pit and get smashed into a million little pieces? What about that? What about when the pigs haul you off from a park bench, lured by the sensor chips in your stack of anti-American library books, upon which, just for a second, you set your precious spectacles?

Glasses are elegant, even ugly ones, and their very existence truly wonderful, making me proud to be of a species so thoughtful and good with its hands. Laser surgery doesn't inspire the same emotions—more like a sickening dread. And yet, it could be a good idea; I don't know. They tell me my corneas are perfect for the surgery, practically begging for it.

But wasn't I in New York?

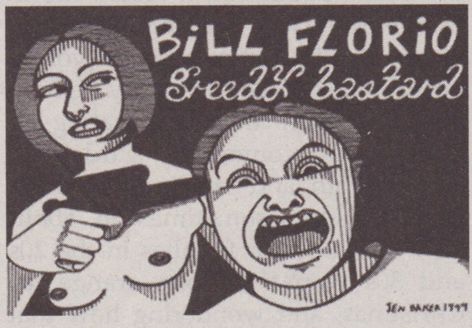
Yes, I am here, alone in New York ("Of *course*, you had to move to New York," said my mother). But only for the summer, which again, is the best season, in which routines are reassessed, and friends and habits, good and bad, are lost and gained. I've spent some time here in the past few years, fun but overfull with awkwardness and longing. Now I've got a neat job, in radio, on the 27th floor of the Municipal Building, a little Spanish class on Monday and Wednesday nights, up on 139th Street, and nothing, no one, to hold me, pin me down, restrict me in any way.

I can't sleep, though.

The first few days, I couldn't wake up! I would lay down for just a minute, *so drowsy, so tired,* at seven in the evening, and wake up at ten the next morning, feeling bloated and stupid as a goldfish in a tank. Now it's been three days with not a wink until dawn. But I'm not worried; I'm free! With no one to hold me, pin me down, rescue me in any way. Sleepless last night, I wondered, is it raining? I couldn't tell just from listening, although my head is inches from the open window. Because the night is so full of streaming, running sounds. The energy of the city presses in from the open window, all night, breathes in and out with you caught in its breath.

Write: Arwen Curry, PO Box 170291, San Francisco, CA 94117
arwen@maximumrocknroll.com

[1]Attention punks! I know you don't have dental insurance, duh! Nobody has dental insurance. That's why you should not only brush and floss, but get you teeth professionally cleaned at least once a year. Preferably twice. It costs about sixty bucks a go. The first time's the hardest, when you haven't been in ten or fifteen years. Yeah, it's possible you're already fucked. But also possible there are only a few minor problems, and better to at least know, right? After this, I shit you not, regular cleanings will keep your teeth from rotting out. Preventative dentistry.



Why You're Not From New York.

In the mid-to-late 90s it really wasn't a cool thing to move to NYC. 'Most people moved to the Bay Area or Seattle or even Portland. For some reason in the past four or five years this has changed. All of a sudden NYU has knocked down half of lower Manhattan to make way for dorms, while neighborhoods formerly known only to be places not to stand around with a nice walkman suddenly have Thai places opening up and all sorts of new people showed up thinking they know everything. For those of you who plan on moving to New York City lemme give you some clues on how to not be a tourist.

1. Don't overdress. If you are at a show you may notice half the people there are trying way too fucking hard. Now I realize that people say, "This is how I express myself," but ya know what, if you weren't such a bore in the first place, there would be no need for the exhibition. Except for maybe two or three people who happen to be *way-the-fuck-out-there,* I can look at just about anyone and figure out that they didn't come from here. The one exception is the super rich kids who grew up in Manhattan and went to private schools way uptown, etc. They basically live in Montauk half their lives anyway. Someone from Jackson Heights or Benson Hurst isn't gonna be the guy with a girl's hair flip and a smoking jacket.

2. Don't under dress. Even worse than the fashion plate type is the Feigning Poverty type. Usually there is some correlation between being "politically motivated" and smelling like you shit yourself. That's a whole other column, but really, there's nothing special about being rich, and there's nothing special about being poor, though pretending you're poor is pretty pathetic. So lose the browned out T-shirts, you just look like the drug addict you could totally afford to be.

3. Don't give a fuck. There is a myth that native New Yorkers are rude. This isn't true; they are just immune to oversensitivity. There is a certain sense of humor (cough cough) that doesn't always sit well with people from other places who have no common sense. If you know the difference between being fucked with and being fucked around with you'll be fine.

4. Don't attempt to drive. There's

some sort of Zen state involved with driving a vehicle here. I do it all the time, but I don't recommend just jumping in and trying it yourself. The mass transit system works fine here, you will go bankrupt from parking tickets alone, and if you have out of state plates you will be the first to have your car broken into. Your bumpers will be almost knocked off within a year.

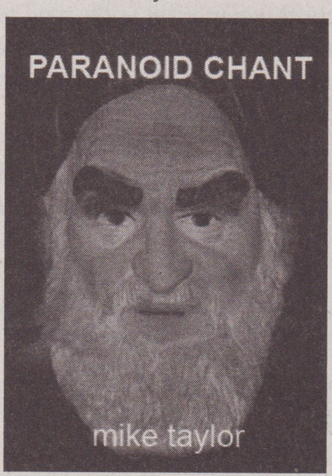
Now, following all this is not gonna make you an instant mook. But, you may end up actually not feeling uncomfortable if say you wanted to

Here's another thing— and this is probably true of a lot of big cities— there are way too many scenes within scenes. Among people I know and hang out with in NY, I see:
—Semi Glammed out punk bar bands
—OuterBoro House Shows
—PC Hardcore/Grind—you know, camo jeans and black shirts
—People that only go to punk shows at CBGB to see ancient bands reuniting
—Weird assholes that go to overpriced shows on holidays and things of a Marky Ramone nature.
—Hipsters (I don't know exactly if there is ever musical taste involved with over the top hipsters, I guess it just has to be arty and corny.)
—Pop Punk kids that only like the 20 or so real pop punk bands left
—Straightforward 60s/70s garage band kinda things
—Art students (Well, they only like two bands—otherwise you never see 'em.)
—Young kids from the Suburbs

There's like, three people I know who regularly cross all these invisible boundaries in New York. They are actually into music and seeing bands play no matter what the whole deal is that comes with it. It seems like most people get a little bit too snobby when it comes to "underground music performances." There have always been a few—and I stress *few*—bands that have gotten away with crossing these boundaries. THE SEA MONKEYS always come to mind. I suppose if you're in a band that isn't gonna fit in no matter what, the smart thing to do would be to play any and all possible shows. For those unfamiliar, the SEA MONKEYS played catchy punk rock that wasn't exactly garage and wasn't exactly pop punk and still was able to be pretty big rock while being really silly at the same time. Anyhow, I saw them at places like ABC No RIO, at dive bars, and at people's houses; they fit with say Walter Lure and THE WALDOS as well as THE GROOVIE GHOULIES or THE CANDY SNATCHERS. Anyhow, I always think of them because I figure that good songwriting and good showmanship should be able to overcome a lot of the strange high school clique-mosphere that seems to revolve around everything.

Personally, I ignore that sort of stuff, there are nice people everywhere, I don't think about how I'm dressed or if my age is too young or old for whatever is going on, it's just music and if it's good, I'm not gonna be a snob about it.

OK next month, back to my usual hating things. Hugs, Bill.
(bill@candids.com)
George Tabb-esque end plug, if anyone wants to put the new SHEMPS CD out, we have it all ready.



Part One:

I have dreams where I'm fathering a brood of ne'er-do-wells, paying a stifling mortgage in a city for which I care not and vying for a parking space each evening when I return home from work. In the dream, everyone is comfortable and cared for. I don't drink so often and I subscribe to a well-regarded newspaper.

I have another dream where all my friends are heads of a family, clean and just prosperous enough. They're democrats. Possibly the corollary of the one I mentioned prior.

There are nights when I dream that the house in which I currently live finally gives to the inescapable entropic force of cracking foundation, rotten slats and leaky roof. My housemates and I have to just give up and walk away from the sagging heap, heads down and without belongings. Four blocks away downtown Providence has bloomed to fit the measure of developers and dilettantes, glistening plate glass and bulletproof everything. There's no place there for the displaced.

It's easy to have a favorite drink, try to catch the news and foster a seemingly well-rounded understanding of local politics via varied and frequent conversations. Similarly it's doable to respond in a timely manner to party invitations, return phone calls, and water the plants when needed.

It is criminally difficult to remain open to the viewpoints of those who you find repugnant, to not wed oneself to a single social circle, and to continually remain rightfully and healthfully alienated by a vapid, one-dimensional entertainment industry as your friends and coworkers recite lines from situation comedies and 90-minute-long features.

Harder still, imagining oneself in handcuffs, perpetually and fatally destitute, or the recent recipient of a particularly heinous prognosis. Try talking to your peers about this at a party, sober. Imagine yourself pregnant, on trial, crippled, alone. How close is this to the reality of your life? Who do you have to thank or blame? What do you see from your window? How long is your bus ride to work? Have you ever spent any time in jail? Do computers just drive you crazy? Now that summer's here, do you have vacation plans? Do you take vacations? From what? When you dream, how often are you stirred conscious? How frequently are you too scared to fall back asleep? Do you consider yourself a paranoid person? Do you celebrate your own flaws? Do you try to understand the flaws of others?

Part Two:

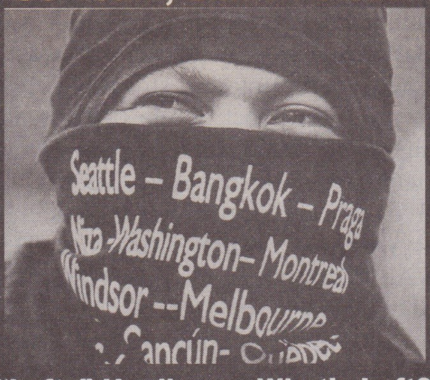
I went down to Manhattan last week to see the premiere of *We Jam Econo*, a film documentary on D. Boon and the Minutemen. The film itself isn't necessarily a technical masterpiece, nor is it flawed enough to be charming in that right. However, the plain passion with which the Minutemen approach their music, and the thoughtfulness with which they engage their artistic and social context almost drew me to tears. Mike Watt cries repeatedly in the movie, which is a little embarrassing; yet how can I criticize? Ian MacKaye shows to the camera the hastily composed note from Hank Rollins informing DC punks of the demise of D. Boon. The live footage is an energetic blast. However, the old California punks they dredged up to interview are so sad. Not in the respect that their lives have turned out to be shit. We're not given sufficient ground to decide that—and anyway, it's none of our business. No, it's sad because they're all still so young (Joe Baiza, Rollins, Jello, some dude from the fucking Nip Drivers, Keith Morris, various friends-of-friends) and seem already so tired. Everyone is interviewed in their home, nine out of ten in perfect SoCal horror movie kitsch-cum-spotless Ikea muted tones into which ex-punks seem to fade. Few people have anything at all worthwhile to say. So I say it's sad because these are, in theory, our forbears. The punxes. But I don't feel any kin to them. Everyone looks so tired, so drugged. And what have they been doing? And after all, were they ever about anything in the first place? Or is it enough to be in a great rock band? To hammer the point home, I discovered during the post-movie Q and A that we had been sitting behind Dez Cadena, my favorite singer from Black Flag—arguably one of the most important punk bands. I kind of laughed, but I had no desire to meet him.

Fuck it man, he should be meeting me.

Top ten: This book, this record, and eight interesting people.

If you wanna: PO Box 28226, Providence RI 02908

Go Team, Smash State!



"Lefty" Hooligan • What's Left?

Let us assume for the sake of argument that recent research had disproved once and for all every one of Marx's individual theses. Even if this were to be proved, every serious 'orthodox' Marxist would still be able to accept all such modern findings without reservation and hence dismiss all of Marx's theses in toto—without having to renounce his orthodoxy for a single moment. Orthodox Marxism, therefore, does not imply the uncritical acceptance of the results of Marx's investigations. It is not the 'belief' in this or that thesis, nor the exegesis of a 'sacred' book. On the contrary, orthodoxy refers exclusively to method. *It is the scientific conviction that dialectical materialism is the road to truth and that its methods can be developed, expanded and deepened only along the lines laid down by its founders. It is the conviction, moreover, that all attempts to surpass or 'improve' it have led and must lead to over-simplification, triviality and eclecticism.*

—Georg Lukacs
"What is Orthodox Marxism?"
History and Class Consciousness (1968)

The term science refers to a comprehensive body of knowledge about the real world that is attained through study, research and experimentation and that is precise, predictive and progressive. A container of reasonably pure water at sea level will boil at precisely 212 degrees Fahrenheit. Not 213 or 211, but 212 degrees exactly. What's more, if we replicate these conditions—a container of reasonably pure water at sea level heated to 212 degrees Fahrenheit—we will see boiling water every time. We can guarantee it. Finally, we can build upon the knowledge that water boils at 212 degrees. Everything from cooking rice to engineering a steam turbine engine depends upon this rather basic fact. In addition, *science* also refers to a particular methodology—the scientific method to be precise—with its combination of observation, experimentation, hypothesis, analysis and verification that is the basis for science as a body of knowledge.

This understanding of science as a means to comprehend and control reality was revolutionary in the seventeenth century, still radical in the eighteenth century, and pretty much a given by the nineteenth century. Science lost a good deal of its luster and promise in the twentieth century, but we'll get back to that in a bit. For now, please note that science came to prominence simultaneously with the rise of capitalism. No coincidence there, as the rationalism of science worked hand in glove with capital's rationality. Each attempts to reduce the living, breathing world to numbers, after all—to mathematics or to profits.

In turn, the main consequences of capitalism's rise—the creation of industrializing class societies increasingly riven with conflict and of laboring classes marked by increasing misery and exploitation—sparked the emergence of socialism by the end of the 1700s. By the mid-1800s, Marx had labeled types of socialism that sought to abolish individualism, competition and private property without being explicitly based in the class struggle as "utopian." Not every kind of socialism that claimed the class struggle or working class revolution was Marxist however. By the end of the nineteenth century, Marxism shared the mantle of proletarian socialism with anarchism, syndicalism, varieties of democratic socialism, and more diffuse traditions of cooperativism and communalism.

Whether utopian or proletarian, Marxist or non-Marxist, socialism generally had a favorable view of science and its accomplishments well into the twentieth century. Anti-industrial, Luddist, back-to-the-land, naturalist and primitivist currents existed within

socialism from its inception, yet remained a distinct minority. Socialism regarded science as one of humanity's supreme accomplishments, the ultimate system for knowing and manipulating the world, and for developing technologies that had the potential for benefiting working people and reducing their labor. In attempting to give socialism an historical, materialist and scientific basis in turn, Marx took things a step further by formulating a more precise, scientific form of socialism, going so far as to argue that the dialectic of praxis—of learning from revolutionary practice to alter revolutionary theory—was a scientific methodology. This scientific impetus also extended to anarchism, with Kropotkin developing a scientific anarchism as counterpoint to Marxian socialism. Finally, Lenin took the next logical step and proclaimed Marxism not just scientific, but a science, with his Trotskyist, Stalinist and Maoist heirs incessantly extolling their science of Marxism hyphen Leninism hyphen fill in the blank.

Leninism's extreme scientism is actually the source of one of its more obnoxious characteristics, a political sectarianism that is frequently all consuming. If in science two plus two equals four, and only four, then Leninists are in a never-ending struggle for the correct political equation. For instance, in the Leninist debate over the nature of the Soviet Union—whether it was a socialist state, a deformed workers state, a state capitalist regime, or a bureaucratic collectivist system—by the logic of science all of these formulations might be wrong but only one of them can be right. Thus, having the political equivalent of two plus two equals four is absolutely crucial for Leninists who consider their socialism a science, engendering vitriolic fights between vanguard Leninist parties over which has the correct political analysis.

Associating science with politics becomes no less problematic if we downgrade socialism from a science to merely being scientific. Perhaps the most dubious aspects of Marx's scientific socialism came from his desire to be predictive and progressive with his socialism. Marx's assumption that history is progressive and often advanced through class revolution, that class society develops in necessary stages from slavery through feudalism to capitalism and that humanity will reach a final classless, stateless, global stage called communism, paradoxically has had very unrevolutionary consequences. Marxist unions and parties—social democratic and Leninist—have often denounced, curtailed or out-and-out suppressed the revolutionary activity of the working class as going "too far, too fast," and Marx himself considered Britain's brutal imperialism in India eminently progressive. Marx's notion that capital's boom-and-bust business cycle can be understood root and branch so that capitalism's final great crisis can be accurately anticipated has proven particularly pernicious. Like atheistic Jehovah's Witnesses declaiming that the end of the world is nigh, Marxism has been predicting capitalism's final collapse, as well as imminent working class social revolution, for a century and a half now.

It is the abject failure of praxis that calls into question Marxist claims of being predictive and progressive. Instead, what is revealed is the utopian and millenarian undercurrents to Marx's thinking. I'll get into the latter point more next column. For the moment, notice that science itself is grudgingly backing off the claim of absolute predictability. From Godel's Proof and Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle to quantum weirdness and complexity/chaos theory, the edges of science are exploring the possibility that fundamental aspects of reality might not be entirely predictable after all.

This is not the general consensus within science by any means; that would require a paradigm shift *a la* Thomas Kuhn's thesis in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. According to Kuhn, scientific knowledge doesn't advance empirically through inductive reasoning from sense experience. All knowledge is imbedded in a scientific paradigm that orders reality and provides meaning to the knowledge, and all scientific thinking and practice operates within the given paradigm. Change from one paradigm to another—say from Newtonian physics to Einsteinian physics—occurs when a sufficient quantity of incremental facts contradictory to the established paradigm accrete and catalyze a revolutionary paradigm shift. What is interesting about Kuhn's *schema* is that the methodology of science works well enough to accumulate the mass of contradictory knowledge required to force a qualitative change in scientific paradigms. What is crucial is not science as a body of knowledge then, but science as a methodology. Shades of Georg Lukacs' understanding of what constitutes orthodoxy in Marxism, and a clear indication of the importance of praxis to Marxism.

That science in the twentieth century became a willing accomplice to vile propaganda, ruthless tyranny, merciless genocide and total war has challenged the assumption that science is on balance beneficent and progressive. The contention that science is inherently neutral, but simply in the wrong hands, has been disputed by an eclectic collection of critics who see science and the technologies it spawns imbued with ideas and practices that, if nothing else, have proven extremely detrimental to this planet's natural environment. A green critique of science and technology has entered anarchism, syndicalism, democratic socialism and social democracy—every tendency within socialism with the exception of Leninism, which still considers itself a science. And a vehement if inchoate anti-technology/primitivist milieu has emerged, principally in the nebulous incoherence that is present-day anarchism, which pillories science as central to the evil of human civilization it seeks to abolish.

Mainstream socialism no longer uncritically lauds science as one of humanity's crowning achievements, nor does it unthinkingly presume that the technological products of science

are intrinsically beneficial, nor does it reflexively strive for the scientific appellation. Socialism now asserts that scientific research and technological advancement need to proceed more cautiously, under some form of socialized control and ecological awareness. Having described how socialism is on a more realistic footing in relation to science, I can turn my attention next column to the utopian fervor so often found behind socialism's striving to be scientific, a zeal as troublesome as it is essential to socialism.

PERSONAL PROPAGANDA... To find out my real name purchase my book, *End Time*, from AK Press (POB 40682, SF, CA 94140-0682) for $10. The book is called *Fim* in Portuguese and can be ordered from Conrad Editora (R. Maracaí, 185, Aclimação, 01534-030, São Paulo-SP, Brasil) for R$ 24,90. I can be contacted at hooligan3@mindspring.com.

Who is more brutal, Saddam Hussein or Islam Karimov? Reasonable victims disagree. Saddam's goons electrocuted his political dissidents. Karimov, on the other hand, loots so much of his country's oil wealth that his state torturers don't have an electrical grid to draw upon. So his police torturers are forced to resort to medieval methods. They boil their "terrorist extremists"—businessmen who refuse to pay bribes—to death.

There's no question about which tyrant is more reviled. Saddam stole millions from the Iraqi treasury, yet he also spread around enough loot to build both a second-world infrastructure and an economic base of power among the Sunnis who amount to about 40 percent of the population. Karimov, absolute ruler of Uzbekistan since the 1991 Soviet collapse, is a glutton whose personal motto echoes David Bowie's old promos for MTV: too much is never enough.

Uzbekistan, a major player in the Caspian Sea energy sweepstakes, is theoretically poised to become an economic success story. It is one of the world's largest producers of natural gas and possesses large untapped reserves of crude oil. As the republic with Central Asia's largest city—Tashkent has the region's only bona fide international airport and even its own subway system—its strategic importance extends beyond the fact that it has common borders with all of the other "stans." But, unlike Saddam's Iraq, every cent generated by Uzbekistan's vast resources goes straight into Islam Karimov's pocket. His parsimony extends even to his thuggish *militsia* (military police): rather than pay them a realistic salary, he grants them free reign to coerce, rob, jail and even murder at will. Not only do the *militsia* pay for themselves, their lawless behavior ensures loyalty. Every cop knows that his neighbors would kill him were Karimov to disappear.

Uzbekistan has a politically and ethnically diverse population comprising Uzbeks, Tajiks, Kazakhs and even Bukharan Jews. While it's common to see women wearing miniskirts on the streets of such secular urban centers as Khiva and Samarkand, the rural Ferghana Valley is home to a fundamentalist brand of Islamism reminiscent of the Taliban. But all Uzbekistanis have something in common. It doesn't matter whether you talk to a guerilla fighter for the radical Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, a prostitute playing the bar at the Tashkent Sheraton or a kid hawking sodas at a bazaar—everyone hates Karimov and everyone hates his *militsia*, a force whose presence is so intimidating that people plan their itineraries to avoid checkpoints and police stations where they'll be robbed or worse.

The full force of Uzbekistan's outlaw police fell upon anti-government rioters shouting "freedom" and demanding free elections and an end to official corruption in the Ferghana Valley city of Andizhan on May 13. Although Karimov now claims that police acted independently, the *UK Independent* reports, "He was in command of the situation having flown to Andizhan from the capital Tashkent and almost certainly personally authorized the use of ...deadly force."

The paper wrote: "The crowds, it has been established, were mown down by powerful coaxial 7.62mm machine guns mounted on two Russian-built BTR-80 armored personnel carriers. Such cannons can unleash 2,000 rounds, barely pausing for breath before they need to be reloaded. A military helicopter was used for reconnaissance purposes and Uzbek troops armed with Kalashnikov assault rifles opened fire on the demonstrators creating a deadly field of fire with the BTR-80s from which there was no escape. The soldiers made sure they had done their work well. After the shooting had finished they went from body to body delivering 'control shots' to the back of people's heads and scoured the town's streets for survivors to finish off."

The bloodletting followed Karimov's observation that ex-president Askar Akayev's order not to fire on demonstrators was the fatal error that led to his ouster in Kyrgyzstan.

Karimov claims 32 Uzbek *militsia* and 137 civilians were killed in the disturbance, numbers belied by the local coroner's own numbering system. "In the end hundreds of bodies—including those of women and children—filled the square," said the Associated Press. Human rights groups say the real death count is between 500 and 1,000.

Bush Administration officials, so strident when promoting liberation through regime change in Iraq, Ukraine and, ironically, when Islamists overthrew the democratically-elected Kyrgyz president—have downplayed the Uzbek massacre. "After 9/11," explains *Newsweek*, "the Bush administration established a strategic partnership with Karimov, plunking down $500 million for a military base in southern Uzbekistan in preparation for

operations in Afghanistan and paying $60 million or more a year in military aid and training."

The Bushies were aware of Karimov's horrific record back in 2001. That year's Human Rights Watch report on Uzbekistan put its "conservative estimate" of Uzbek political prisoners at 7,000. According to HRW: "Prison guards systematically beat prisoners with wooden and rubber truncheons and exacted particularly harsh punishment on those convicted on religious charges, subjecting them to additional beatings...Torture remained endemic in pretrial custody as well." George W. Bush didn't mind. He accorded Karimov all the honors of a full state visit to the White House shortly thereafter.

How can the United States claim to be fighting a war on terrorism when its biggest allies are terrorists themselves?

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Current books: *Wake Up, You're Liberal!: How We Can Take America Back from the Right* (Soft Skull Press, 336 pp., price $14.95), is out now, available everywhere. *Generalissimo El Busho: Essays and Cartoons on the Bush Years* (NBM Publishing, 208 pp., $19.95 hardback/$15.95 paperback) is also out. The speaking tour is over but if you're at a high school or college with a budget for bringing in speakers, I'd be happy to come to your city.

It was hot in Texas. So hot that it was hard to move or think. I always find myself talking about the weather and the temperature. I hate the cold as much as I hate the extreme heat. At least when it is really fucking hot, the times seem to be a lot more fun. When it's cold you tend to pull within and hibernate, whereas when it's hot you sprawl out, hang out, and commiserate in the sweltering misery. I think the Portland punks had an even harder time with the heat than I did, and now the 90-plus degree humidity has followed me home. I guess summer is officially here.

I kicked off the season in Youngstown, Ohio at the Emissions from the Monolith festival. It's a four day, heavy stoner rock fest that draws obsessed folks much the way the current round of punk fests do. There are those that joke that the old punks end up in the stoner rock scene to "retire," much like there was a long running joke about old punks retiring in Richmond, VA. Much as my slowly aging body is showing the difference from a decade ago in its inability to push as hard or to endure for as long, I'm far from any notion of retiring from anything. There were a lot of old punks at the fest in Ohio. I had a blast hanging out with people who were all just stoked to watch bands and enjoy the get-together. And Yob fucking rule!

If the punks retire at the fest in Ohio, then they kick it back up a few notches in Austin, Texas for what this year was called Chaos in Tejas. Last year's Prank fest was a fleeting moment. I wanted to get more of a taste of the town by staying a few more days, but all that I accomplished was getting even more hangovers. In addition to three days of non-stop festivities, I hitched a ride up to Denton for an extra night of Avskum and was introduced to my new favorite band, Tolar, who I obsessed over all weekend long. The shows at the Chaos fest were day and night, including pre-shows, post-shows, plenty of parties, and swimming in-between if you could keep your energy going in that fucking Texas heat.

The way I figure is that three days of non-stop punk fest is enough to do anyone in. Three days of alcohol consumption will take its toll, as will just surviving three days of blast furnace, humid temperatures in the 90s. Combine all three together and you have some haggard and exhausted punks come Sunday night. Even though I didn't get my fill of actually seeing the town, nor of exploring the bookstores and infoshops, I did get to drink avocado margaritas, eat vegan tamales, amazing tacos, and lots of other Mexican dishes, and Indonesian food several times. I got to stick my toes in the cold Barton Springs water, which is crystal clear and an iridescent blue-green color I've only seen in pictures of subtropical locales. And I rode around the town in the back of a pick up truck on more than one occasion, which gave me a nice suntan real fast.

The fest shows were at night and fairly reasonable with 6-8 bands at a time. Each day had one of my obsessive favorites along with new obsessions and highlights from overseas. Avskum from Sweden, Selfish from Finland, Bumbklaat from Mexico, Born - Dead Icons from Canada. Bastard Sons of Apocalypse, the Krum Bums, Army of Jesus, and Complete Control represented the hot new shit coming out of Austin. Signal Lost were amazing. World Burns to Death are always a favorite of mine. Cut-Throat and Chronicle AD were awesome! Tragedy completely blew my mind. It is no secret how much I love them, but this took the cake. I was drunk enough to put my camera away and just rock out in ecstasy and not even fret that my flash got kicked off my camera (it's fine).

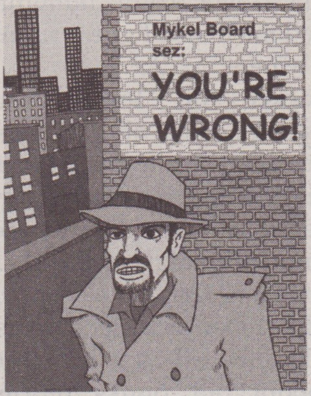
I've been obsessing over Hellshock for the past year and a half or so, non-stop, and have yet to get my fill. They were the other band for which I based the season around, and they delivered the most amazing set. I think everyone was left open-mouthed. I was out of my mind stoked on the metal apocalypse, and held court front and center just thinking, "Yep, see, I told you!" at how fucking amazing they were. Deathreat came back from the grave and tore the shit out of everything. I haven't seen them, nor really listened to them, in years and they were jaw-dropping amazing and explosive like they've been at it forever, which of course they have. There

were tons more bands that played that I haven't mentioned, too. If all of that wasn't enough, there were outdoor shows in the daytime sun and late night shows on the pedestrian bridge as well, which rounds out a day to leave you stoked and exhausted at the same time, in just about the most perfect way.

The first afternoon show was outside at a barbeque joint complete with sun and sand and Lone Star on tap. Warcry, Endless Nightmare, the Krum Bums, and Kegcharge all played. It was stupid hot and really quite fun. Reminded me of hot summer days in NYC in the empty lots, even though a barbeque joint in Texas has to be about as opposite as you can get. Sunday afternoon I was at a cookout at Jay's house where even more bands played in the back yard—it doesn't get much better than that. Army of Jesus played again, which was great cause I missed them the night before. False Security totally rocked, and Deathreat busted out another amazing set, despite the thick heat. The punks kept a veggie grill going while the day sweltered on, and I got to hang out with my favorite four-legged friend, Krusher.

As much as I love the sun, the late night hours are still my best. On a normal day I stay up until 5 a.m., so anything that gets started at 2 a.m. is pretty exciting and fits my schedule well. A 2:30 a.m. show on a bridge was about the best idea I had ever heard of, but honestly, by the time I got there and Signal Lost played, and the firecrackers went off, and the mania ensued, I was so fucking tired I could have slept right there. At least it was the exhaustion that comes from satisfaction.

Somehow I survived and made it back home to Virginia with no daydreams of returning to Texas anytime soon. Richmond rocks, and my garden exploded in the mere five days I was gone. Ripe tomatoes and strawberries were eaten straight off the vines… It's going to take me awhile to recover, but I'll be hopping on the road in a mere day or two to see Hellshock again. I'm far from punk rock retirement; in fact it's more like the prime of my life. Or perhaps just the beginning of what I hope is a rad, punk-ass summer.



If reason is manifested through language, so also is unreason. This correlation alone should be enough to make us question the now fashionable attribution of reason to schooling and self-discipline, and unreason to chemicals causing neurotransmitters to malfunction. —Thomas Szasz

I'm in CBGBs. MDC is playing. All the original members. Al Schwitz's 19-year-old son is a roadie. Old punks are out in force. Yeah! It's been years since I saw people older than me at CBs. Booze, drugs, and age have worked their cosmetic magic. It's the reverse of the *Portrait of Dorian Gray*. Somewhere in some closet, a picture of punk rockers isn't getting older.

Among the wrinkles is a hard slammer that must be somebody else's kid. He's about 18 with just enough Hispanic features to set me tingling. On top of that, he's shirtless, without a speck of body hair to mar the tight skin on his chest. You can count the ribs. I do. He's got piercing green eyes—and they're piercing toward me. I pierce back.

He walks up to me and says, "You're Mykel Board, aren't you."

I check to make sure the bulge in his pants isn't a gun. It isn't.

"That's me," I tell him.

"Wow!" He says, looking at me from boots to hat. "I've been a fan since I've been old enough to read. You're great."

I look at his tight belly and think, "So are you."

"Hey," I ask. "Do you know the square root of seven thousand four hundred and twenty-three?"

SHIFT SCENES:

It's the Republican National Convention here in New York. The city has decided to arrest first and ask questions later. It may not be civil liberties correct, but it will save our Republican mayor lots of embarrassment.

Jello Biafra is gonna speak at some local bar. He's invited me to sit in. I haven't seen him in ages and will be happy to, I tell him. He doesn't tell me, however, that the invitation needs ten bucks to accept.

Suffering from anorexia of the wallet, I'm unable to attend. Instead, I join a bunch of fun lovers outside the bar. The streets are full of people.

Above, the whir of helicopters makes me feel like a Negro in L.A. Every few minutes a siren goes off, mostly to the west of where we are.

I talk with a fat guy outside the bar. He wears a T-shirt with a picture of George W. in a target. He tells me he's got the $10, but it's too packed inside and he'd rather wait for...

Blam! Out of nowhere comes a sea of blue... up the Avenue... the wrong way... from two of the side streets. Cops. Cops. Cops. Millions of live cops—converging on us. The only escape is down one of two side streets. I don't know the neighborhood that well. I know that one of the streets dead ends. The other is a through street to safety on the other side of town.

"Do you know this area?" I ask the fat guy.

He nods.

The sea of blue is more visible now. I can see the helmets and the clubs beating from one hand into the other.

"Quick!" I ask him. "What is the capital of The Ivory Coast?"

****

Language lets us communicate. One side wants information. A question is asked. The other side gives the desired information by answering the question. If you ask the wrong question, even a right answer will not be useful.

Newspapers all over American have published the results of Swedish research. The local headline about the report was "Study: Gay brain activity differs." The pull-quote was "The sexual area of a gay man's brain works a lot like that of a woman when exposed to a particular stimulus, researchers say."

The article goes on to tell how researchers exposed "heterosexual men, heterosexual women, and homosexual men to chemicals derived from male and female sex hormones as well as ordinary odors, such as lavender. The subjects responded differently to the sex hormones, with the homosexuals and women responding similarly. The response was measured with PET scans. All subjects were healthy, unmedicated, right-handed and HIV-negative."

Their conclusion? "This is one more piece of evidence that is showing that sexual orientation is not all learned." Another biologist said the research "clearly shows a biological involvement in sexual orientation."

My conclusion? As in the fictional examples at the beginning of this column, the researchers asked the wrong questions of their subjects. The newspapers asked the wrong questions of the researchers.

To her credit, one of the original authors of the smell study said, "The brain-activation of gay men may contribute to the sexual orientation of those men, or simply be the result of their orientation and sexual behavior. She added that the brain scans revealed no anatomical differences between any of the participants' brains." Few newspapers reported this part. At least not the ones I read. Why not?

I've often written about how scientists and social scientists construct research to give the answers they want. If you want to prove pornography causes violence, you can construct a test to prove it. If you want to prove punk rock increases the number of remaining dingleberries after a good wipe, you could construct a study to prove that too. But why would you want to?

The newspapers offered no analysis or questions about the gay smell study. They reported the "facts" without penetrating the sphincter of the research. Here are some questions I would have asked the researchers.

1. How do you decide who's a homosexual? Is it only people who *say* they're homo or het? How do you check?

2. Why weren't lezbos included in the research? You'd expect them to have the same reactions as het men. Was it that the results didn't give the answers you wanted?

3. How do you know smell is a "biological involvement" rather than something learned? Wine connoisseurs can smell things in a Merlot that take years of training. Isn't it logical for homo men to learn to identify and get turned on by the smell of men?

4. What's the relationship of the promotion of such a study to recent attitude surveys? Those surveys say most hets wouldn't see homos as a threat if you could prove the basis to be biological.

5. Why weren't people who identify as bisexuals included in the test?

6. Does the ability to smell beer make one biologically German—or punk?

7. Do Hispanics have genetic visual *big-butt* connections to the sex center?

No one asked these questions—at least not the newspapers that reported the research.

Still, not asking questions is slightly different from asking the *wrong* questions.

When people conduct a study, they always ask a question. The research is supposed to answer that question. We do this on a smaller scale in everyday life.

Suppose I want to buy shoes, but I don't know my size. I'll ask the question, "What size shoe fits me best?" Then I'll try on various sizes until I find one that fits. When one fits, I'll note the size. Then I'll take that information and test it on other shoes. And finally, when I find a size that usually fits my foot, I'll consider my question answered.

What if, in my shoe-buying quest I ask a different question? If I ask, "Why does a size 10 shoe give me blisters?" I will go through a lot of pain in finding out the answer. Though the conclusion may be right (they're too big), it will not be useful in buying shoes.

Now suppose I divide all shoes into "blister-giving," and "not blister-giving." Then I investigate the characteristics involved in the two groups. I'll come to the empirical answer that size 8 shoes are not blister-giving while all other sizes *are* blister-giving. I'll report that information to the world at large. The world at large will accept it.

The newspapers will report that size 10, as well as size 7 shoes give blisters. Size 8s do not. Johnny Public will storm Payless, demanding size 8. He'll squeeze his feet into them; sure they won't give him blisters. When he gets blisters anyway, he'll think something's wrong with him. Or maybe the shoes aren't really size 8.

Except for those who wear a size 8 shoe, the research will not be useful—though the investigation was rigorous—and controlled for both my right and my left foot.

The foot blisters of stupidity aren't so far removed from a homo telling himself, "It's my genes that did it," because research in Sweden said some self-proclaimed homos could smell men. Going from the particular to the general is false unless you can show that the particular *are* general. How can self-proclaimed homos in Sweden be any more general than size 8 shoe wearers.

The smell study is only the tip of the hemorrhoid. On the web page with a report about this study (www.newscientist.com/article.ns?id=dn7358) is a link to an even dumber study. This one is about homos and maps.

The headline says homos *"read maps like women"* although the body of the article says they "adopt male and female strategies. Therefore, their brains are a sexual mosaic."

The key to this study is previous research that shows women read maps and navigate by landmarks. Men, on

the other hand, orient maps to North and South and then read by street, and distance. Homos, according to the study, do both.

Obviously, the writers of this report have never been to Mongolia. *All* Mongolians use landmarks to navigate. There are no roads. You go in *that* direction until you get to the oasis. Make a left and go straight until you come to a mountain. Turn right at the mountain and you'll see a monastery on top of a small hill. Head toward the monastery... You get the idea.

They don't know from north, miles, kilometers and certainly not the number of streets. There are no streets.

Does this mean Mongols read maps like women? Maybe all Mongols are homos? How can you *prove* biology is the cause of something so obviously cultural?

Okay, the research is stupid. Researchers ask dumb questions and come up with dumb answers based on those questions. Is that so bad? Most of the world is dumb. Why is this inch of dumbitude any worse than any other? If Christians accept homos of gene, but not of choice, isn't it better to try to "prove" it's a gene? Good questions. And they deserve good answers.

In 1994, Richard J. Herrnstein and Charles Murray published *The Bell Curve.* In that book, the authors contend that programs like Headstart and others, intended to help "the disadvantaged," are useless. These programs won't work, they say, because intelligence is biological. In fact, it's tied to race. Negroes are, they say, biologically dumber than white folks. Orientals are the smartest.

Critics objected. The author's information was skewed, they said. And besides, what is the whole notion of "intelligence" anyway? Isn't it just a set of arbitrary criteria, used to boost the values of test-giver? What does this say about the preconceptions of the researchers?

Good questions for the Swedes too. Dividing the world into homos and hets, then testing their differences, means that the world is divided into homos and hets. It means homos and hets are *what you are*—not just one facet of the many things you do.

Worse than that, looking for biological *causes* for homo-tude implies biological solutions. How many designer children will have the homo gene? Homos married? Are you kidding? They'll pass the gene on to their kids! It's like HIV.

Homo-tude, instead of a perversion, will become a disease again. This time a genetic disease. Christian doctors will look for *the cure.* Nancy Reagan will say science will find it through stem cell research.

Worse than that, we will continue to seek the answer to our problems and our differences in our genes, rather than our wills. Freedom will be taken from us faster than you can say "PATRIOT Act."

"Oh, he dresses like that because he's got the Nike gene."

"Oh, he can't help liking fast music with no melody. It's the Ramones gene."

You'll be a puppet. A victim of your genes, helpless in a world of other gene victims. You'll be unable to do anything that wasn't programmed into you. Is that the kind of world you want to live in? *That's* the right question.

Let's make this clear. I'm not for banning such research. I don't think it should be illegal or that the "results" should be suppressed. We shouldn't suppress them; we should challenge them. We should expose the motives behind them. And most important of all those who support such research need to be aware of the implications.

For homos, that research is like a big rubber band. It's gonna come snapping right back in their faces.

ENDNOTES: [*Visitors to my website: mykelboard.com or subscribers to this column (email to: god@mykelboard.com) may receive a few extra endnotes. There are just too many to keep up with.*]

More sentence names dept. Wingusanddingus tells me he hasn't gotten laid in over 20 years. Whatta wrist!!

The sentence name?

Q. What did James do when he got a new cat?

A. James Spader

Another is from my website guestbook. Posted by Tony Party.

Q. After she hooked a wire to her nipple and one to my nuts what were we doing?

A. Sharon Payne.

Reality dept. I really did go to the MDC reunion at CBGBs. I also saw Cheetah Chrome (a new dad) and his Band of Oldmen. It made me feel great. First, the guys on stage were even older than me. Second, the crowd was really mixed—my age, kids, even a pregnant punk at CBs. Yeah!

I used to think bands should just break up when they get old. You weren't *supposed* to play after a certain age. You were supposed to put on a tie and sell insurance. I was wrong. Rock as long as you can!

Jew of the Month dept. Those of you who have enough vouchers to attend school might be familiar with the man I quoted at the start of this column. I used another quote from him for my last column, and have used others in the past. He's kind of an idol of mine, though he supports those Libertarian guys who are wrong about everything economic.

That man, Thomas Szasz, is also a Jew—and my Jew of the Month. There's a newly revised edition of his terrific book *The Myth of Mental Illness.* It's not 100% right, but it is right more often than most. Szasz's *The Meaning of Mind* has been another inspiration to me. Read them!

Hey baby, lemme fill your tank dept. Kesha sent me a printout with an ad for Willie Nelson Brand Biodiesel Fuel. It's a combination of diesel and corn oil. According to the accompanying article, biodiesels can actually be 100% corn oil. In fact, Rudolf Diesel, the inventor of the diesel engine, ran his car on peanut oil. It was only later that the petrol industry pressured a switch to their products.

Can we really make a car that runs on corn oil? Now *there's* a question worth asking that will never get asked.

MDC's favorite website? Since I've written so much about 'em, why not

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Inmates "S/T" CD $8.50
Knee Deep In Shit 7" $3.50 (Sounds yucky to me)
Brains Of Humans 12" $6 (Switzerland, 4 songs)
Crimenes De Guerra "Sangre Rebelde" CD $8.50
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Dr Know "Best Of" CD $12
Mentors "Live" CD $12
NOFX "Maximum Rocknroll: So What If..." CD $12
RKL "Keep Laughing" CD $12
Mixed Reviews book by Aaron Cometbus $3 (68 pages)
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Raw Power "You Are The Victim" LP $12 or CD $12
Career Suicide "Invisible Eyes" 12" $8.50 (Feral Ward)
Inepsy "City Weapons" LP $10 or CD $10 (Feral Ward)
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MDC "Now More Than Ever" CD $12 (1980-2000 comp)
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Asta Kask "Rock Mot Svinen" LP $12
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Kohu 63 ""Sotaa 81/82" LP $12
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DOA "Live Free Or Die" CD $12
Offenders "Died In Custody" CD $12
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Tuomiopaivan Lapset "Discog" 2xCD $13.50
Mesrine/Depression LP $10
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Riistetyt "2000-2005" CD $10 (Finland)
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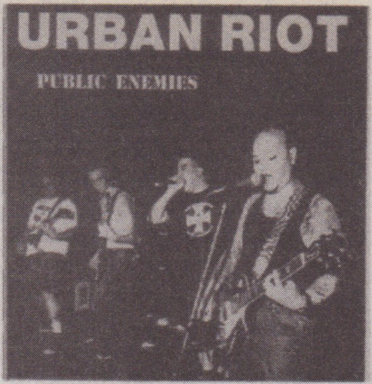

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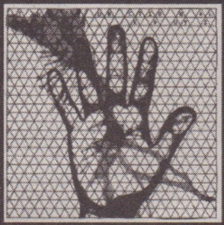

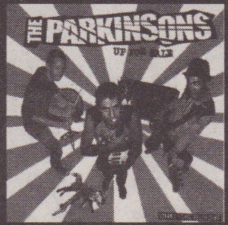

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4 Missoula @Edge of the World SK8S
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7 Denver @Lion's Lair w/Frontside 5
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9 Lawrence,KS @The Replay
10 Norman,OK @The Skullhaus Basement
11 Tulsa,OK @Mel's
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23 JohnsonCity,TN @The Hideaway
24 WashingtonD.C. @666 House
25 Richmond,VA @The Nancy Raygun
29 NYC @The Cake Shop
30 Brooklyn @AutumnBowl
31 Newport,RI @Area Venue

August
1 Connecticut t.b.a.
2 Mass t.b.a.
3 Mass t.b.a.
4 RhodeIsland t.b.a.
6 Whitneyville,Maine @Robstock '05
7 Whitneyville,Maine @Robstock '05
8 Montreal,Quebec @t.b.a.
10 Kingston,ON @t.b.a.
11 Toronto,ON @t.b.a.
12 Rochester,NY @house party
13 Cleveland,OH @Lakewood Subs
14 Lansing,MI @ t.b.a.
16 DesMoines,IA @Vaudeville Mews
18 DesMoines,IA @Hairy Mary's
20 Denver,CO t.b.a.
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treat 'em to a place of their own? I found it. It's www.youcanbeacop.com. Yep, it's a real site. They train you in paralegal, security guard and general copdom.

Of course, I tried www.youcanbeadeadcop.com, but my browser said, "cannot locate server."

Dead men don't file lawsuits dept. On December 23, 2003, Lenny Bruce, the greatest Jew since Moses, was posthumously pardoned by New York Governor Pataki. The governor said the posthumous pardon—the first in the state's history—was "a declaration of New York's commitment to upholding the First Amendment."

"Freedom of speech is one of the greatest American liberties, and I hope this pardon serves as a reminder of the precious freedoms we are fighting to preserve as we continue to wage the war on terror," Pataki said.

Yeah right.

And how much was planted in* The *Times? dept. The *NY Times* reports that the US State Department produced "video news releases" that look like news reports, but are actually created to "paint a rosy picture" of US actions abroad. There is nothing in the releases to identify the source, and TV stations are encouraged to include them in their "news" programs...

And it saves them a bundle in overseas staff.

Tooting my own dept. *I, a Me-ist*, a book of my columns over the last 20 years has again been delayed. Funding relies on way overdue payments from Lookout Records to Screeching Weasel—it's a long story and it's in court.

Things are looking better however, for my book about Mongolia. That's already listed on Amazon.com (Is Amazon evil? I don't know. Ramsey from AK says yes. But, though they're big, they seem to take everything—and give everyone a chance.) If you want to pre-order the book, you can type in my name or *Even a Daughter is Better Than Nothing* and order through Amazon. You'll get a discount, and you'll be first to get the book when it comes out.

It all started about a year ago when I got in touch with Eileen/Soulmine Records about a mama-band compilation CD she was putting together called Mom-Aid, the proceeds of which will go through UNICEF to aid Tsunami victims. I wound up interviewing her to find out more about the project, her label, and her band, Placenta. Her band mate, Rachael, joined in the interview too, and was printed in this column (Oct. 2004 #257).

They had lots to say about juggling mamahood, work, music, and politics, and I knew it would be great to meet them in person if I ever had the chance. Well, I made the chance happen when I was out in the Bay Area this past March and met up with them at Eileen's house in Oakland for a couple hours.

I guess it could be said that we hit it off pretty well, because by the end of the too-short couple of hours, I had been invited to play with them at the Mamapalooza NYC show in May. (Their lead guitar player had finals and wouldn't be making it.) However, it did seem a rather bizarre arrangement, due to the fact that I'm by no stretch of the imagination a guitar player. And I don't think the one time I did play guitar in a band counts—it was a Bikini Kill cover band for Halloween.

Nonetheless, the absurdity alone made the invitation even more appealing to me. (The initial appeal, of course, being my already established love of their band and a desire to join them in bringing some subversive presence to a "festival" that was looking to be a questionable, executively produced mainstream media convention.) Upon hugging our "nice to have metcha" goodbyes, I promised to try my best to learn enough guitar in a month's time to pull it off, and if I didn't feel confident after a month of trying, I'd let them know so they'd still have a month to wrangle someone else to do it.

A month of trying got me not even able to strum through the Ramones' "Sheila is a Punk Rocker" due to my uncooperative fingers' inability to make a complete F chord. Realizing that the Ramones' songs are definitely simpler than most of Placenta's, I told the Placenta mamas thanks for letting me try, but there was absolutely no way I'd be pulling it off. They came back and said no sweat, they'll have Eileen's husband play guitar instead, and why don't I still come along and play sax?

Hell, yeah! They pony expressed their latest practice recorded to CD, so I could get on coming up with sax parts for the four songs they'd be playing at the show. The absurdity reached new heights and I was practically giddy with excitement. *Placenta hasn't ever even had a sax player and I'm being handed over four songs to saxify?* My guitar dreams of dread and embarrassment quickly turned to the good kind of anxiety you get when faced with a challenge that given a lot of enjoyable, concentrated effort, you know you'll be able to pull off.

I snapped to and set up a practice schedule for myself. In hindsight, it was too ambitious (as usual), and didn't resemble reality in terms of available free hours in my busy working mama days. But I got a necessary and well-timed break when Daddy 'Nesto finished his finals and decided that he and our girl would take off on a week-and-a-half Daddy-Daughter Team road trip. I tightened my self-assigned practice schedule and even passed on much-needed nights out to see the Collapsing Lungs and the Mary Tyler Whores. I just worked my shifts at the Birth Center and came home to play.

It was a hella good time (though I did start to miss my sweeties around day three). And perhaps the most entertaining part about the Placenta sax seclusion was the one "band practice" we had via phone, with them in

Oakland and me in South Florida—me playing my little handheld recorder into the phone receiver so they could hear what I'd come up with so far recorded with their CD playing in the background. They said it was perfect and we proceeded to sing and hum more ideas to each other, and that was perfect too.

The next time we practiced was the first time we met up with each other, on W. 24th Street in Manhattan. I had gotten there the day before and was staying with my friends in Brooklyn who helped hook us up with a cheap place to practice for an hour before the show (thank you Scott, Luci, and Coyote Studios). I was sweating it, thinking we needed at least two hours. But things went so well, like we had always played together, and we only needed 45 minutes.

We dashed back to Manhattan and proceeded to enter a celebrity hangout (according to my local friends) bar world (called the Cutting Room, owned by some famous actor dude I'd never heard of) full of major mainstream parenting magazine sponsorship and a "press conference." My natural buzz killed, reality hit me that it really was going to be less of a show and more of a showcase for the corporate discovery game, "Building Mamapalooza momentum and success, blah, blah, blah," as I heard the founder turned Executive Producer say countless times throughout the evening.

Days beforehand, Rachael, Eileen and I had brainstormed via phone and e-mail to come up with independent media folks we could try to pack the "press conference" with. Some did come, and one in particular, Vikki, for whom we got a press pass for *HipMama* zine, was bold enough to question the organizers and other participants:

"Where are the people of color?" (Out of nineteen performers/bands, there were only three, one of whom was playing in Placenta.) And:

"If this is a 'movement'-building event for mothers, why is there no organized childcare?"

The show itself ranged from painful to full-on fun. (And sadly, there were far more press people and performers there than actual audience people.) Though painful (read Guinness and free wine required!) reigned, there were three other bands (besides Placenta of course, heh heh) that were heavy-hitters and pretty good: Frump, the Mydols, and the Mothers (from Darby, UK).

There's only so much shtick I can take with songs about telling your kids to eat their damn spaghetti, wearing your stay-at-home-mom fuzzy house slippers instead of your corporate power pumps from the pre-kid corporate job days, and nagging kids to pick up their socks. And even though there's some schtickiness to the three bands I liked, I most certainly can get into a remake of the Ramones' "I Wanna Be Sedated" that now demands, "Get a Vasectomy!" and an early 80s English punk sound that inspired a new dance from Rachael and me called "The Incontinence Pogo." (We both learned too late that pogo-ing is out until we make a firmer commitment to kegals—see the end of the column for a "mom-song" Rachael wrote about our wet undies adventure.)

As for our ten minutes of the show, we had so much fun playing, and I really loved how it sounded. Plus, we were the only band there throwing out free hand-screened and Sharpied shirts between songs and while introducing and playing songs, and raising issues of violence against women, beauty standards, the public school system, and domestic violence.

We were definitely the most colorful and diverse band (including racially and multi-generationally) with Rachael's crazy tall bright-green liberty-spiked mohawk, Eileen's multi-colored extensions swingin', Jaswho's striking looks and ass-length locks, and Karen (a mother of three daughters, one of whom was in the Yeastie Girlz, and grandma of four—yeah!) wearing her bad-ass 80s checkerboard neck tie. (Then there was comparatively plain-looking, two-toned-hair, honky-assed me, though I guess I did add my own two cents to the diversity ante, since I was the only sax player all evening.)

On a personal level, the whole musical experience was nothing like I'd ever done. It's not every day that a band who lives over 3,000 miles from you, and who's never had your particular instrument in their band before, invites you to come along just for fun, handing over their songs for you to come up with pretty much anything you want, and likes it! But on a whole mom-band "movement"/explosion/Mamapalooz a festival level, the experience was alienating and disappointing. Leave it to the corporate, business-building minded to take something with consciousness-raising, grassroots movement-building potential and try to mold it into a marketing scheme and sell it.

I know Rachael's thinking now's the time they ought to distance themselves from Mamapalooza and the term "Mom Rock" and get back to the roots from which they grew. (There's been a recent, rather exciting exchange between the head Mamapalooza honcho and Rachael. Specifically, Rachael's full-of-chutzpah response to the honcho's request for personal "band bio" information that she can use on her upcoming trip to Hollywood to "pitch" Mamapalooza to some "top secret, potentially big, exciting opportunities.") Hopefully, the desire to do a good ol' fashioned DIY tour in the fall will pan out and I'll be able to join them once again. I'll keep ya posted.

Punkparents, keep in touch. PO Box 220331 / Hollywood, FL 33022 or yardwideyarns@hotmail.com

Rachel's mom-song:

When I was younger, I danced in the mosh pit
Now, when I think of it, I go to the toilet
When I was younger, I used to slam dance,
Now if I jump at all, I have to pee my pants
Up, Down, Up, Pee
Up, Down, Up, Pee
Up, Down, Up, Pee
Incontinence Pogo!!!
Up, Down, Up, Pee
Up, Down, Up, Pee
Up, Down, Up, Pee
Incontinence Pogo!!!

CrimethInc. Workers' Collective Bullet-in

Avast, ye MRR fans of nefarious intent! This month, we return to the subject of squatting—only this time, as a tactic for building community networks and involvement. As a side note, the first issue of our new periodical *Rolling Thunder* is now available ($5 from us at CrimethInc. Far East, PO Box 1963, Olympia, WA 98507), and we're organizing a convergence July 14-18 in Bloomington, Indiana that will include all manner of radical education, entertainment, and activity. You're all invited; more information can be found at www.crimethinc.com.

My friend and I made it from Baltimore to Chicago. Our destinations were different but our paths came together for a while. We hopped off the train somewhere in downtown Chicago—it had reached freezing temperatures, and we were on hotshots. I'm not even sure what the wind-chill factor is on a train moving that fast. People had told us it was too cold to travel this time of year. Sure our toes were numb, but we learned to survive in another extreme. The weathered riders told us that the rail cars were unrideable, so we found new holes to hide in. I can hear them around the campfire: *The yard security is impenetrable these days. You should just buy Amtrak tickets.* Unwilling to back down, we became invisible. We didn't buy Amtrak tickets, and had lots of fun proving them wrong.

My friend's destination was Chicago. Mine was Indianapolis. We said goodbye. I put on my one clean shirt and headed to the on-ramp, despite all the words of caution from the generation who stuck their thumbs out before: *You can't get a ride anymore. You might as well go ahead and buy a car.* I got a ride out of the city pretty quick. Lots of people stopped to pick me up, in spite of all the horror stories they'd presumably been told. Turns out you still can get rides from perfect strangers, people ready to break through the socially constructed barriers that are supposed to keep us from helping each other. I didn't ride the dirty dog[1]. I got a tan, received free rides, and met fascinating people.

One of these was an amazing Spanish anarchist, who picked me up out of the blue. We talked about different anarchist groups in this country and his. It was right around the time of the elections, and he had been impressed by the Don't (Just) Vote campaign. He told me about Spanish trade unions, and I was impressed myself. We shared stories about our lives and our hopes for the future. The conversation continued. Eventually, he asked if there were squatters in America, like there still are in Europe.

How was I supposed to answer this question, when it had been such a stumbling block in my own life? I could still hear in my ears all the horrible rhetoric, glorifying the past and dooming the future, of the older, wiser, hardened, weathered squatters who had told me the days of squatting were over: *Maybe you could get away with it in Europe, but otherwise you should go ahead and get a job and rent an apartment—it's just not worth the trouble.* This had been the story of my life since I left "home" a year and a half earlier: every representative of every echelon of society telling me it was impossible to squat. To maintain hope, I had to shrug off the nagging dismissals of my older squatter friends as well as those of people who had more in common with my parents. It was almost enough to make me and my friends give up.

But as it happened, I was on my way to the Black Pearl, our squat in Indianapolis. It was not your usual squat, by any stretch of the imagination—it was an experiment, a testing ground for an approach to squatting that was new for us. As in our previous experiences, we had still been obliged to look for empty houses, steal locks from Wal-Mart, clean the place up, and pee in buckets. This time, however, we were banking on openness rather than secrecy.

We had a hypothesis as to why squatting was so difficult for so many people. We proposed that squats were always getting busted because those who opened them appeared to be committing a crime: sneaking in through broken windows, dressing in black clothes, maintaining silence, keeping the doors boarded up, and hiding from the neighbors are all suspicious activities. We had been involved for some time in a current within the direct action movement (or the street fighting movement, or the shoplifting movement, or whatever you want to call it) involving the use of costumes and role-playing to create the illusion that we were law-abiding citizens while we carried out the most unlawful of activities. Likewise, while committing the crime of trespassing, wouldn't it be sensible to appear to be doing something entirely legal? What if we were to move into a house openly, giving all pretenses of being valid home owners, wearing regular clothes, talking to the neighbors, inviting old and new friends over, starting community projects out of the house as needed?

In the beginning, our idea seemed solid, or at least crazy enough to work—all we needed was a house. We'd looked and looked and looked, until our shiny crowbars were all nicked up and our headlamp batteries ran dim. Luckily, there were tons of buildings to choose from (this is the case in most any major city, but according to both our experiences and government statistics, it seems that the numbers of abandoned houses in Indianapolis are especially high), and eventually we found the perfect one. It was a nice yellow duplex, in a neighborhood most would describe as rough. With a little research, we discovered it was owned by a German bank. This was perfect for us: we would have no risk of homeowner involvement, and the likelihood was low that any major bank overseas would be particularly concerned about the property.

The next question was how to open a squat in as unremarkable a manner as possible. We began by talking to the neighbors about how we were going to move in. Once everyone in the neighborhood was expecting us, we figured there was little likelihood of the police

being called on us for breaking and entering.

We decided upon noon as an especially ordinary time for moving into a squat. It was nice and sunny. We invited all of our friends over for the occasion; later, reflecting on our decisions, we concluded that ten kids on bikes is a bit out of place when most people move in—a couple people in a U-Haul might have appeared more standard—but this minor sloppiness didn't do us any harm. With all of our friends from around town sunning themselves on the lawn and porch, we pulled out our multi-tools, screwdrivers, and drills and got the boards off the windows and front door. Behind the board, the front door was open, and in three minutes we had our own locks on it. Had any of this taken place at midnight with flashlights, we would have run a higher risk of drawing police involvement, or at least local suspicion.

We had asked our friends from around town to bring things, to further our appearance of legitimacy. Someone showed up with food, others with potted plants, brooms, other odds and ends. We quickly set those up, but our house still seemed barren: it would hardly survive the scrutiny of dubious parties.

What were we to do? "Well, there is a bunch of furniture at the old bookstore that got condemned, and it's trash day…" Perfect. We set off in a friend's van and returned with plenty of furniture, silverware, decorations, tools, and everything else we could get our hands on. Within a couple of days, we had the bottom floor looking a perfectly harmless suburban home.

We still had no running water or electricity yet, so when the neighbors came over to visit those first nights and found us reading by candlelight, we just told them that the wiring was fucked up—and they brought over more candles. We had friends living five blocks down the street, so we used their bathroom a lot, and brought over water in a cooler from their hose.

Turning on water and electricity in squats is something many others have written on with much greater clarity than I could attempt, so I only mention it to bring up another matter: our water and electric were fixed and turned on thanks to our good relations with the neighborhood. More about this shortly.

From the beginning, we wanted our squat to be a social center. We wanted it to be a place where people could see an illegal squat serving as a resource to the people of the neighborhood; we didn't want others to experience it as a risk, an eyesore, or, even worse, the private project of yet another unsociable group of squatters unwilling to come outside and interact with their neighbors. We came in trying to think of something amazing and fun and useful that we could offer, something in which the community could participate, that would transform the building into a communal space the neighborhood would never again allow to stay empty and unused. We had no precedent to work from, nor much of a specific idea of what we could do with the building other than just sleep in it.

So we asked around. We learned that there were already a lot of feedings for the homeless, and some neighborhood meetings associated with the church; we didn't have enough space for a community garden unless we knocked the house down. Then finally, someone (I'm not sure who—it could have been a neighbor, a visiting friend, or even me) came up with the idea that we would have a free store. Not just a one-time thing—no, our house would be a 24-hour free store. We'd put everything we could think of out on the porch for free.

This turned out to be the perfect idea. We split up all over the city, grabbing every useful item we could get our hands on. To our delight, this meant we could finally rescue everything we found in the trash: books, clothing, food, toys, whatever; it all ended up out there on our porch! We made some pretty looking fliers, though I don't think it mattered how pretty they were—they had the magic word on them: *free*! Way more people than I would have imagined showed up that week—more than fifty, that's for certain. By the end of it, most every useful item was gone, including every bit of food. It was time to go dumpstering again. Soon, people began putting things they didn't need on our porch, or calling us over to pick them up from their house.

Next thing I knew, our neighbors were talking politics with us on the front porch—and my friends and I were shocked again and again to discover just how radical the "average" person is. The second week, even more people showed up. Soon thereafter, I had projects to attend to far away; fortunately, I was confident that the keys to the house were in good hands, and that the neighborhood knew what it could do with the space.

Flash-forward again to my newfound Spanish comrade and I exchanging stories as we fly down the highway. The full history of the Black Pearl would have taken me a week to tell, so I told him that in fact I could show him a squat in America, albeit an atypical one, and it wouldn't even be twenty blocks out of his way. We pulled into Indianapolis and I dictated directions to him.

As we stepped out of the car, I realized something must have happened while I'd been away. There was a giant trash pile sitting in the front lawn—this didn't seem to be the hallmark of a successful, legitimate-looking squat. I looked in the windows: the house was empty, the walls perfectly flat and white. It was being remodeled. Crestfallen, I persuaded my new acquaintance to drive with me over to my friends' house a couple blocks away, to learn what had happened.

My friends there filled us in. After I left, the free store had enjoyed a few more wildly successful weeks, during each of which it was attended by well over one hundred people, and had received lots more donations from others in the neighborhood. At first, with no one living in the house, there had been a little less energy around the project, but eventually someone from the neighborhood took the initiative and moved in—that front window never did latch. Nobody cared that someone new was living in the house. Eventually two old friends came through town and decided to settle there, taking the place of that occupant; they easily struck up a good relationship of their own with the other

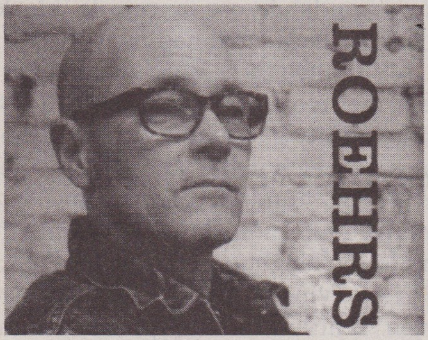
denizens of the neighborhood, and the free store continued as a constant presence on the front porch. A family from the neighborhood ended up squatting with them, and one member was an electrician. With their combined skills and resources they turned on the water and electricity.

It turns out I had arrived three days late for the end of the Black Pearl, which was a surprisingly friendly and relaxed occurrence. Remodelers working for the German bank showed up one morning and were surprised to discover people in the house. They asked civilly how soon the occupants could be out, and everyone left that day with no complications.

All in all, our experiment proved that squatting not only is still possible in this country, but can even serve as a starting place for radical community organizing—and all this, at no financial or legal cost to any of us. Perhaps our project would have benefit from a steadier core of volunteers, but it's always possible to learn from our experiences. With nowhere to stay, my friends had left town, so I opted to ride further south with the Spaniard—on to Bloomington, where I would catch up with old comrades and scheme about how the Black Pearl would sail again…

If you are in Indiana and want to work with our squatting collective, contact us at blackpearlindy@yahoo.com.

[1] Traveler slang for a Greyhound bus.



Living Out Loud

Randale Records from Germany has a really good split EP for you skinheads this month! The colorful EP starts on side A with VOLXSTURM. VOLXSTURM's first effort, the *Oi! Is Fun* LP, was issued in the beginning of the 90s when socialism had just expired in the German Democratic Republic. Freedoms had been lacking under the old regime, which VOLSTURM wrote about in "Dead Fishes." Read these reflections: "They tell you how to live / If you dare bloody minded you will go to prison / they instruct what to do / they tell you what to think / But only dead fishes are swimming with the current / And we still live our revolution / They tell you, you are the only one / And they wanna see how you eat their shit / They want to educate and teach you / And sweep their own dirt under the carpet / They tell you, what you are doing is wrong / Thoughts like that break your neck / They rip you off all day long / You felt like being buried alive / But only dead fishes are swimming with the current / And we still live our revolution."

Those are thought provoking lyrics with a good rock and roll foundation! The second song on the VOLXSTURM side is "Punk Rock Show" and the band sings about the skinhead lifestyle and the persecution by society. This song will appear on a new LP on DSS Records from Linz, Austria in the near future.

Side B of this EP features ULTIMO ASALTO from Catalan, Spain with two hammering skinhead songs! This shit is super heavy and wrought with a menacing display of skinhead force! The songs are translated to German and English for skins that don't speak the Catalan language. Give the lyrics to "Forever" a look: "He really has nothing to lose / Always alone, no one cares for you / Step aside the demon is back / Is back for more, this time he will not / Let you go! / The time has come forever in the shadows like it or not / The time has come forever in the shadows the deal is done / He is only asking for one thing / He wants you soul, but that's a precious gift / It's up to you t pay the price / Now be prepared, the devil is walking by your side / The time has come forever in the shadows like it or not / The time has come in the shadows the deal is done / Bye!"

Yes! Those are words to remember delivered with crushing Oi! guitar prowess and dangerous gruff vocals!

Also out on Randale Records this month is a new release by one of the longest running German skinhead bands PÖBEL & GESOCKS. These esteemed skins are well respected in the punk and skinhead community. In the past, a reviewer who did not do his homework was nervous about the hammer in the PÖBEL & GESOCKS band logo. It's a regional German thing that Englishmen or Americans might not understand. On the lyric sheet of this skinhead beer drinking celebration are the symbols for dumping nationalism and the swastika in the trashcan. That should clear up any doubts about which side PÖBEL & GESOCKS is on.

The two-song 7" is steeped in German beer and you can't help but lift your stein in a joyful toast to PÖBEL & GESOCKS. Long may they drink!

Contact Randale Records for your copy of the PÖBEL & GESOCKS EP and the VOLXSTURM / ULTIMO ASALTO split EP, Fichenstrasse 5, 78658 Horgen, Germany, www.randale-records.de.

Fuck yes! Scotland's SWELLBELLYS are back with a great LP called *Bullets and Blades* on Peter Bower Records. These punks have been producing excellent punk rock for many years. Their strength and consistency is nothing short of amazing! Side A starts off raging with "From the West"— a good song!

Song two is "It's My Life," a fine tune, and then you get "Bullets and Blades," the title song. This fucker kicks ass! Song number five is "Fear Breeds Hate." This song has poignant lyrics; read these words: "Yer just a victim of circumstance, never stood a bastard's chance / Who's in control of yer fuckin' life, standing fucking choking on your hate / Fear breeds hate / This fucking prejudice is now your own, a father's fears been fucking passed on / See other tribes as the enemy, fucking ain't the way it's meant to be / Fear breeds hate / Anger and distant spew from your face, Ya don't need to be a fucking waste of space / Open yer eyes see what's up ahead, wake up now cos yer a long time dead / Fear breeds hate."

Side A finishes with "Last Chance" with lyrics about how society is steal-

ing from the worker. "All governments need to die." Side B is equally entertaining. "Standing in Line" is about the oppression of a nation. "Don't Need It" deals with the racist games that society perpetuates. "Trust" is about a betrayal by a friend. Song ten is a cover song "Cop Killer" originally by BODY COUNT. You know the underlying story here. Song eleven is a great sing-a-long anthem called "I Ain't Blind." "Governments lie = people die / no fucking vote = bullshit democracy." The last song is "Revenge" about killing all the pedophiles ("Hanging ain't good enough for this fuck!). This is a great record!

Order your copy of SWELLBELLY's *Bullets and Blades* from Peter Bower Records, PO Box 132, Leeds, LS6 2RR, UK, peterbow@alcoholic.co.uk.

SELFISH, those well respected thrash kings from Finland, have a six-song 12" on Feral Ward Records for you headbangers. Sugi, from Japan, gives you amazing cover art as always. SELFISH bludgeons you with some of the hardest of all current hardcore! You get relentless shots to the skull: "Seedy Life," "Just Kick It," "I Wanna Feel Some," "Living Out Loud," "Never Satisfied," and the title cut, "Cause Pain." All the songs are filled with heavy-handed guitar and drums. The singer shouts out his frustration with this bleak world we live in. Read "Cause Pain": "You feeble-minded fuck, why can't you realize / Say hello to my cock I'll ram it between your eyes / It's not if we lived or died, rather how we live our lives / You can't knock a moving target, it's time to realize / You are living in a ridiculous imagination / for me it gives some mad frustration / You don't care what I say? / Inflict pain, cause pain / For me now thinking, it is some maddening frustration / This your living in a ridiculous imagination / Coz you don't trust me, well, I don't trust you / I'd rather cross you off my list, fuck you / You are living in a ridiculous imagination / You are living in a ridiculous imagination / Coz you don't trust me, Well I don't trust you / I'd rather cross you off my list, fuck you / You are living in a ridiculous imagination / For me it gives some mad frustration / You don't care what I say? / You don't care what I say! / Inflict pain, cause pain." Fuck yes! This band recognizes the hopelessness of perpetuating life on this planet. We are surely doomed! Now we can listen to the soundtrack to our extinction: SELFISH's *Cause Pain*. Order from Feral Ward or Combat Rock.

Punk rock band MISHAP has a seven-song extravaganza for you fucks! This is a fast, hectic punk rock scream-fest with relentless drumming and lots of venom! The band rips through "Truth of War," "Amazing Disgrace," "Body of Christ," "You Will Rot," "Kill Yourself," and "Bloodlust." All fast, all tough-as-nails, all inspiring! Write to Social Napalm, PO Box 4073, South Chelmsford, MA 01824.

Japanese punks PERSEVERE are coming to demolish your paltry little punk world! This month PERSEVERE presents their *Sex Tracks* EP. This shit starts off with a full head of steam and continues the manic pace throughout! PERSERVERE has a good grasp on the thrash method of madness! These songs attack your senses on many levels and there is no relief in sight! PERSERVERE slashes through "Criminal Game," "Your Number," "Scatter," "No Equalize System," "Expose," and "Area." This record has chaotic singing and guitar playing, yet retains enough melody to make the songs a success. This is a good release! Contact Insane World Records, c/o Yuuki Komatsu, 6-9-22-204, Itsukaichi Chuo Saeki-Ku, Hiroshima, 731-5128, Japan.

Yes! COUGHING UP BLOOD from Tempe, Arizona has an entertaining thrash EP for you punks and skaters. The EP is called *Copstach* and the title song hinges on the theme of "stupid fucking cops" and their "dumb facial hair." On the cover, you get a primitive painting of the punks getting retribution on a bleeding cop prostrate on the ground in front of the barbershop. You get nine blistering thrash monsters on this rough-hewn EP. One standout tune is "Death to False Hardcore." Read this: "Fuck your fucking open E / Fuck your technical bullshit / Hardcore's not a fashion show / Or a forum for your guitar wankery / Death to false hardcore / Tired of fucking tuff guy mosh / Sick of ninjas in the pit / Talk about hardcore unity / And you're gonna get hit / Death to false hardcore / Tired of stupid time changes / Sick of emo breakdowns / Don't give a shit about your girlfriend / Or how good you play guitar."

Fucking punk as fuck! For your copy of the COUGHING UP BLOOD *Copstache* EP, write to 9276 South Myrtle, Tempe, AZ 85284; www.thrashattack.com.

Until next month, see you fucks in hell!

I learned only fairly recently how my father spent his early twenties, the same period in my life I find myself hurtling through right now. Enrolled in a good university, he found himself so deeply politicized that he could not help himself from getting expelled, tracked down by the police, imprisoned, and eventually forcibly conscripted. This was in pre-Islamic, monarchic Iran, which is important to note, but for the sake of the nostalgic narrative of a daughter about her father, this could have happened anywhere. It is, of course, hard for me to imagine my father this way, hiding out on his parents' rooftop in the near-morning, scurrying away when the click clack of police boots receded back into the night. Harder still for me to imagine his turning himself in to avoid the hazards of disappearing into the underground, and to save his family the worry of having a fugitive for a son. He who made my dinners for so many years, combed my hair, walked me to school, made me do math problems on the weekends when I just wanted to go outside to play, and tells me now to get a real job before it's too late, before I am bitter and full of regret.

When I was maybe eight or nine, my father crouched down near me after a marathon Mario Bros. session in my room and told me about God. He said that there were people who believed in God, and that they were fools, and that they would never give me a moment's peace to live my life how I deemed fit. He went on to tell me that I didn't have to be rude to them if I didn't want to, or if it didn't seem right, but that I should never, ever give in to their demands. Four years later, when I was thirteen, my first favorite punk band (the Germs, duh) told me the same thing: there would be "no gods making up my mind."

The conversation we had was simple; I wonder if my father even remembers it. Of course, it could have been something he mulled over for a long time, putting together just the right words that would keep me from coming home a born-again Christian, or worse yet, coming home with my spirit broken by the world around me. I often wonder how well my father himself is doing in this regard. He not-so-gently reminds me of the *other* things I could presumably be doing with my life. "Your cousin just bought a house, your old friend makes $100,000 a year, everyone you once knew is passing you by," and I can't help but question if he is really just talking to himself.

Because really, the choices I've made aren't so extreme. I've tried to be ethical, sure, but that's different than putting your life on the line. The thought lingers—always—that I'm just taking one version of the easy way out, which of course he didn't do until much, much later when the priority of family took precedence over everything else. When my father and I argue about my life, I have always avoided the obvious conversation ender, though I've often fantasized about it. He would call me a fuck-up, or tell me that I am making a mistake throwing my life away running around with all manner of punks and freaks, and I would tell him that he's a sellout, that he gave up too easily, that a life in the suburbs mowing the lawn may have dulled the boiling over tension in his life, but that it just created mine.

I described this fantasy conversation to a friend. Her incredulous reply: "What are you, 14? You can do better than that." I reminded her that that is about when we all start battling our demons, earlier than that even, but that until we defeat them the terms remain youthful, immature, or obvious. Chances are, I will never have this conversation with my father, not because I am afraid of hurting him, but because if things get that callous I fear his response. Face it; if you had fought in a revolution that eventually crumbled in your fingertips, you probably wouldn't be too impressed by your young daughter's half-rebellion either. So I go in circles and circles, caught between both extremes and still wondering every day about what my father would say, or what he would do if he had the options that I do. What Would Dad Do? So much for no gods making up my mind.

When I was ten or so, my father was offered a job outside of Kansas City. Eventually, my family decided to stay in New York, but it is a funny exercise to imagine myself as a Missourian. First off, I would have been a Royals fan—talk about futile!—but that's hardly the most important part. A few years ago, the thing I wondered most was whether or not I'd still be punk, but now that doesn't seem like the most important part either. After all, it's not as though life in Kansas City would have made my father any less of a recovering communist, or made me feel *less* out of place in the straight, white world. Maybe, though, without New York City hovering over me, I would have had to invent my own forms of rebellion rather than just latching on to pre-existing ones. I used to think, "God, I could have turned out *normal*," but now I realize that I probably just avoided being even more of an outsider. Would I be angrier now, more willing to take chances? With fewer opportunities for escape, (escapism?), would I be more ready to go out into the world, teeth clenched, ready to fight?

Instead, here I am, deadline time again at the punk bible, somehow in the position of having the most and least responsibility of almost anyone I know. A hundred schedules to remember, a million things to do, but no rent to pay, no real set schedule, no boss telling me what to do. Alternating between marveling at my luck, cursing the work, and wondering what's next

So what's next? Consider this column the formal apology to my parents, and more importantly, my first step in leaving the worries and fears of their lives behind me. I am looking for more than escapism, to be sure. My father, the revolutionary hero of my imagination and the quiet, clever partner-in-crime of my youth, you taught me this: No Gods, No Masters. Who would have guessed then that I would have to remind you of this lesson? I hope you understand.

***

golnar@maximumrocknroll.com

Free beer!

Golnar told me she'd buy me beer if I made this drawing my column header. I think I'll have a Lagunitas IPA. In other news, it's summertime and there's no way I'm gonna sit around bullshitting my way through a long column when I could be out skating the pool at the Berkeley skate park, playing baseball with my girlfriend, and drinking Lagunitas IPA. Maybe I'll even work on the magazine a little... Naahhh!

Speaking of the magazine...

We got a new printer cuz our old one sucked. I mean (to quote DRI) they *really* sucked. Lots of copies of last month's issue came out with missing pages and repeated pages. If you were unfortunate enough to get one of these defective copies, please get in touch with us and we'll get you a new one.

If you missed it, you've gotta go back and read Mantooth's hilarious column this month. And speaking of... we can always use guest columns and letters. If you've got something to say, please send it in. You could be the next

Karl Bakla! Email mrr@maximumrocknroll.com. Don't make us come to you, because we will, and you won't like it.

This is the last issue for our zine/record reviewer Jip Daems because of some bullshit about him having to go "home" to the "Netherlands." Like that's even a real country! (Am I quoting *The Simpsons*? I don't even *know* anymore.) Well, whatever his excuse, he will be sorely missed. (Sorry I didn't get chance to say "G'bye," dude.) Now we need to find someone new to review all that screamo stuff. Call us if you're interested and you live in the Bay Area.

Speaking of the Bay Area...

Anyone remember Berkeley's DTK? Defend The Keg was the best band I never saw. They had stickers, lyric sheets, maybe even a demo, but did they ever play a show? Their singer/mastermind Brian lived in the same residential hotel on Telegraph as my Dad, and he made cool, crazy jewelry that he sold on the Ave. He would run around in a little one-man-circle-pit singing DTK's signature song "Dead Skate." Dude was, like, 30 years old but acted like a teenager, which is probably why I liked hanging around him so much. Anyway, "Dead Skate" had an insulting couplet for just about every Bay Area band that was around at the time, like (speaking of) FREE BEER ("Free Beer, we know you're queer"), SPECIAL FORCES ("Spacial Feces, I hate you to peice-ees"), CHRIST ON PARADE ("Crust on Charade, you don't get laid"), and of course the DEAD KENNEDYS ("Jello Biafra you really suck, your little band ain't worth a fuck...Dead Skate!"). Where are you now, Brian? I want a copy of that demo!

Speaking of the olden days (I'm sorry if I do this too much)... A few years ago we found this old punk resource directory with addresses of bands and labels from around 1980, and decided to go on a self-guided punk history tour of SF. Turns out the DILS, THE EYES, and this dude Peter Urban all lived a stone's throw from where my band practices right now. (We can practically feel the residual rock energy as we play...) But who was Peter Urban, and where is he now?

And speaking of my band...

By the time you're staining your fingers black with this fanzine I will be on tour with Onion Flavored Rings and our roadie extraordinaire Erin "Demos" Yanke! I'm more stoked than ever to be going out there into the sweltering, festering, right-wing outback of the USA. Please come hang out and enjoy some good time punk rock with us. I'm gonna try to have a Bay Area comp tape by the time we go. Two bucks or trade for beer. I know they don't have Lagunitas out there, but I'm not really that much of a beer snob. I'll have some Schlitz, Leinie's, whatever you got.

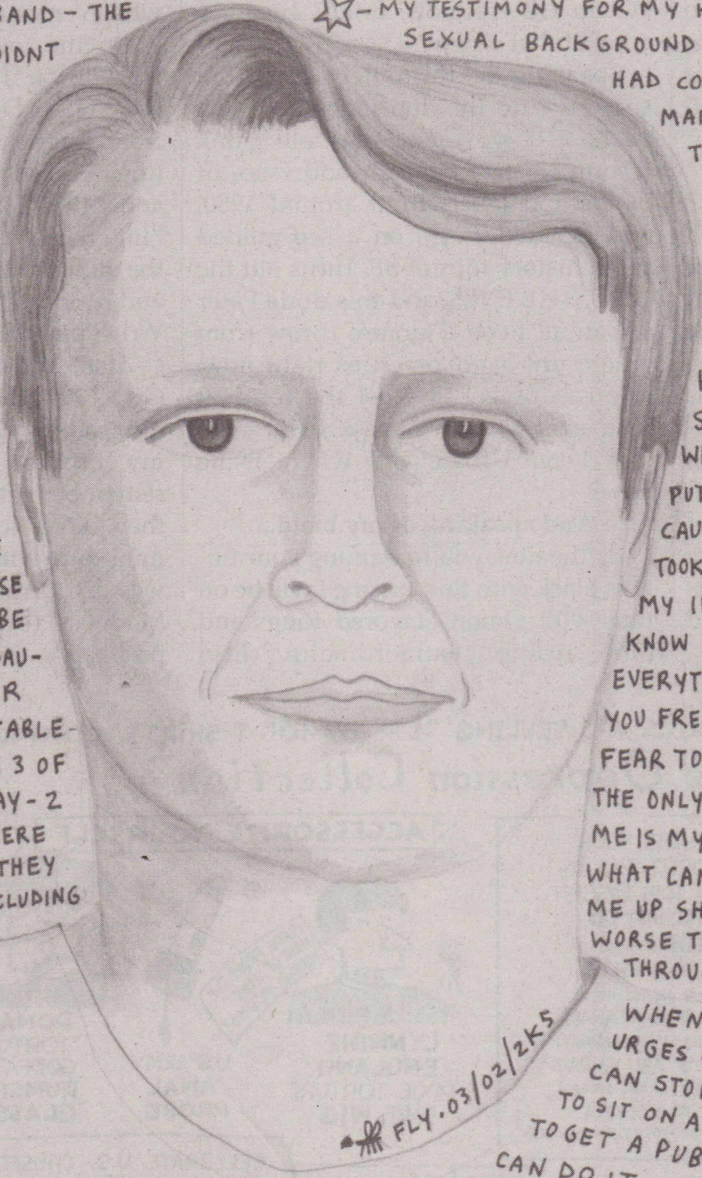
On the tour mix tape: "Sergi" by DIGGER & THE PUSSYCATS, "FNI" by THE LOW BUDGETS, "Theme from Sparta FC #2" by THE FALL (their best song in decades), "Amoeba" and "1945" (they're the same song!), "Inte Som Ni" by KNUGEN FALLER, the JESUS FUCKING CHRIST demo, and of course GORILLA ANGREB.

Write! paul@maximumrocknroll.com

Also! You'd better catch the ICKY GILRFRIENDS before they become old, jaded 16-year-olds... Thanks to my brother Jack for helping me remember DTK lyrics. Apparently they played lotsa times and even did a mini-tour with RAW POWER. Where was I? ...Apologies/props to Bobby Madness (only he will know why, probably).

ITS HARD TO BE PRIVATE WHEN REPORTERS DIG EVERYTHING UP - WHEN MY HUSBAND WAS ON TRIAL THERE WERE 168 OR 170 FRONT PAGE ARTICLES IN WEST VIRGINIA - HURRICANE WEST VIRGINIA - WE HAD REPORTERS CAMPED OUT ACROSS THE STREET IN THE CHURCH PARKING LOT - THE SAME PARKING LOT WHERE MY DAUGHTER WAS RAPED - IT WAS FEB. 11 1996 & MY DAUGHTER WAS FIVE - IT WAS THE DAY I SAY I DIED - SOMEONE TOOK HER FROM THE HOUSE IN THE NIGHT & RIPPED HER APART - LEFT HER IN THE SNOW DRIFT PRESUMABLY TO DIE - THERE WERE OBJECTS LEFT IN HER BODY WHICH THE POLICE LATER "LOST" - MY DAUGHTER CRAWLED BACK TO THE HOUSE & MADE A NOISE SO I SENT MY HUSBAND TO CHECK ON IT WHILE I NURSED THE BABY - HE CAME BACK SAYING IT WAS KATIE & THERE WAS SOMETHING WRONG WITH HER & IT TOOK US A BIT TO FIGURE IT OUT - WE CALLED THE POLICE RIGHT AWAY & AN AMBULANCE & WHEN THEY CAME THEY ARRESTED MY HUSBAND - THE ONE MAN I KNEW DIDNT DO IT - THEY DIDNT LOOK FOR THE MAN WHO DID IT - THEY DIDNT PRESERVE THE CRIME SCENE & THEY LOST THE RAPE KIT - THEY CONVICTED MY HUSBAND FOR 53 YRS & HE CANT GET OUT UNLESS HE SAYS HE DID IT & BEGS FORGIVENESS WHICH HE WILL NEVER DO BECAUSE THEN THERE WOULD BE NO CHANCE OF OUR DAUGHTER'S RAPIST EVER BEING HELD ACCOUNTABLE - THEN THEY TOOK ALL 3 OF MY CHILDREN AWAY - 2 BOYS & A GIRL - THERE WERE 7 REASONS THEY TOOK THEM AWAY INCLUDING ☆→

☆ - MY TESTIMONY FOR MY HUSBAND & OUR OWN SEXUAL BACKGROUND (IE - THE FACT THAT WE HAD COLORED CONDOMS WAS REMARKED ON) & THE FACT THAT I WAS RAPED MYSELF DURING THE INVESTIGATION & I NEVER PRESSED CHARGES - THE LAWYERS WERE EXPENSIVE - I HAD TO SELL THE HOUSE & SPEND ALL OF OUR SAVINGS - AUG. 21 1997 WILL BE THE DAY THAT IS PUT ON MY TOMBSTONE BECAUSE THAT IS THE DAY THEY TOOK MY CHILDREN & SEVERED MY IDENTITY - WHAT THEY DIDNT KNOW IS THAT WHEN THEY TAKE EVERYTHING AWAY THEY GIVE YOU FREEDOM - THEY CANT USE FEAR TO CONTROL YOU ANYMORE - THE ONLY THING THAT CONTROLS ME IS MY OWN SENSE OF MORALITY WHAT CAN THEY DO TO ME? LOCK ME UP SHOOT ME? IT CANT BE WORSE THAN WHAT IVE BEEN THROUGH - THREATS DON'T WORK ON ME - WHEN MY OWN MORALITY URGES ME TO ACT NOTHING CAN STOP ME - WHEN ITS TIME TO SIT ON A LEDGE OR FAST IN ORDER TO GET A PUBLIC HOSPITAL BACK I CAN DO IT - ITS A FORM OF FREEDOM & I NEVER WOULD HAVE CHOSEN IT BUT I APPRECIATE IT.



Jamie "Bork" Loughner

Bork is an activist with MAYDAY DC - a group that does direct actions around issues of shelter & hospitals - last year she did a five day ledge sit to protest the vote to sell a shelter - finally on christmas eve they tied her up & took her off - she is also involved with street patrols, cop watch & homeless outreach - currently she is fighting to improve conditions in St. Elizabeth's Hospital for the mentally ill - www.maydaydc.mahost.org - email: maydaydc@hotmail.comto contact fly email: fly@bway.net - (put MRR in the subject so I know its not spam) - website: www.bway.net/~fly

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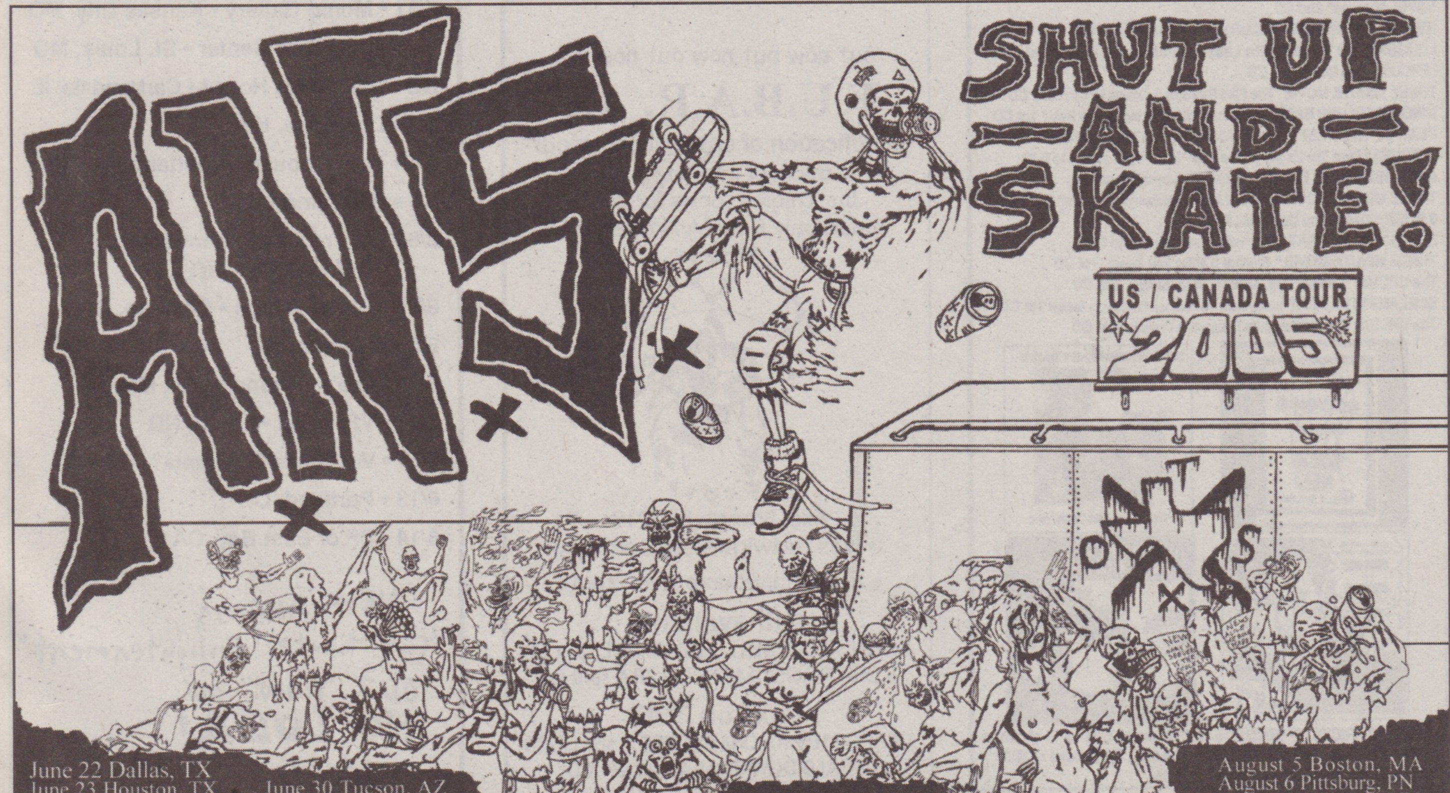

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7/22 • Longhaul info shop, maybe • Berkely, CA
7/23 • Poison Apple (or ?) • LA, CA
7/24 • Flagstaff, AZ
7/25 • The Bean Cafe • Las Cruces, NM
7/26 • Sound On Sound (record store) w/J Church! • Austin, TX
7/27 • Denton? Austin? TX
7/28 • 1919 Hemphill space • Ft Worth
7/29 • Whitewater Tavern • Little Rock
7/30 • $100 Taco • Tulsa, OK
7/31 • Momo Gallery • Kansas City, MO
8/1 • Lemp Arts Center • St. Louis, MO
8/2 • Lost Cross House • Carbondale, IL
8/3 • Louisville, KY
8/4 • Tom's House • Chattanooga, TN
8/5 • Bloomington, IN
8/6 • ...we're a basement band... • Milwaukee, WI
8/7 • 1719 W Albion • Chicago, IL
8/8 • Madison, WI
8/9 • Mala's • Minneapolis, MN
8/10 • VFW Hall • Fargo, ND
8/11 • Vachon Is.?Olympia?, WA
8/13 • Portland, OR
8/14 • SF or East Bay, CA

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MRR NEWS

MRR NEWS FOR ISSUE #267 COMPILED BY ARIEL CELESTE & GOLNAR NIKPOUR

CONVICTED ARSONIST FINDS WIDE SUPPORT

EUGENE, Ore.

After serving five years of a 23-year sentence, a young man considered an eco-terrorist by prosecutors and a political prisoner by his supporters says he considers himself a teacher about environmental protection.

"I think I've been more effective while in prison," Jeff Luers told The Oregonian newspaper in an interview last week. "People are more inclined to listen to what I have to say."

Luers was convicted in June 2001 after he admitted setting an early-morning fire at a Eugene car dealership in June 2000 that destroyed a pickup and damaged two other trucks. He claimed it was a protest against gas-guzzling sport-utility vehicles contributing to global warming.

Prosecutors said he was an arsonist who put other people at risk.

"The bottom line is Luers was a terrorist who set fires and detonated explosive devices trying to make a political point," said Kent Mortimore, chief deputy district attorney for Lane County. "He put people in supreme jeopardy."

Mortimore said the 23-year prison term was justified.

But the city of Eugene's Human Rights Commission wrote a letter in 2003 supporting Luers, endorsing his efforts to have his sentence reduced. The commission noted that similar crimes "have not been met with such harsh sentences."

Luers has appealed the length of his sentence, arguing that his punishment far exceeds his crime, especially when compared to other people convicted of arson.

Luers has gained support from a wide spectrum that includes doctors, educators, lawyers, grandparents and members of social-justice and religious organizations. More than 400 people around the country have signed a statement backing Luers.

The more-moderate supporters condemn arson as a way to protest environmental issues, but they also see the long sentence as "absurd," said Dylan Kay, a member of Luers' defense network. Many of them note the irony, he said, "of sending a young person to prison for so long for attempting to do something about global climate change."

Supporters in 24 cities around the country and overseas have held fund-raising events for his defense. The gatherings included Eugene; Olympia; New York; San Francisco, Los Angeles and Sacramento, Calif.; Washington, DC; Cincinnati, Ohio; and Portland, Maine. Events also were scheduled in London, Moscow and Melbourne, Australia.

His conviction included charges of trying to set another fire at an oil yard in a Eugene neighborhood—charges Luers has denied.

At the start of his trial with co-defendant Craig Marshall, their defense attorney died unexpectedly. The judge declared a mistrial, and Marshall subsequently accepted a plea bargain resulting in a five-year sentence. Marshall was released in January and is living in Lane County under the supervision of a parole officer.

Luers declined a plea bargain. Days before his trial was set to begin in March 2001, a second arson caused $1 million in damage at the same car dealership. Police have not charged anyone in that fire.

Three months later, Lane County Circuit Judge Lyle Velure found Luers guilty on 11 of 13 charges, including three counts of arson, each carrying a mandatory sentence of seven years.

Most of his appeal centers on the issue of "merger," a term relating to the fact that he was charged and sentenced on three counts of arson for one fire, said Eugene attorney Lauren Regan, a member of his defense team.

Case law is fairly strong with regard to stacking convictions, Regan said. "The law says if there is one criminal episode, there should be one conviction," she said.

If the appeal isn't successful, Luers will be eligible to take further legal action claiming inadequate representation at his trial, Regan said, because his trial attorney didn't challenge the merged charges.

In the meantime, Luers says he has been

assigned "security threat group status" at the Oregon State Penitentiary because he is listed as an anarchist affiliated with the Earth Liberation Front, a loose association of extremists who advocate destroying property to protest environmental damage.

Luers denies any affiliation, noting he successfully challenged a prison decision ordering him to spend 120 days in solitary confinement after one of his essays was printed two years ago in the Earth First! Journal.

State officials declined to say whether Luers is classified as a security threat.

BRAIN CELLS GROWN IN LABORATORY

from *The Belfast Telegraph*

Scientists have grown fully mature brain cells in a laboratory for the first time, using a technique that mimics the natural process of brain regeneration.

It promises to open the door to new ways of treating and possibly curing debilitating brain diseases such as Parkinson's, epilepsy and Alzheimer's.

The scientists said they were able to produce virtually unlimited quantities of brains cells, which could revolutionise transplant medicine as well as leading to new drugs to stimulate the regrowth of damaged nerves.

Bjorn Scheffler, a neuroscientist at Florida University who made the breakthrough, said the procedure involved mimicking the natural process through which key stem cells in the brain orchestrate partial regeneration of the brain.

"Our study shows for the first time the entire process that goes on in our brain for life. We can, in a dish, recapture the process in front of our eyes," Dr Scheffler said. It was not the first time that scientists had shown stem cells can be manipulated in the lab to produce mature brain cells, he added. "But nobody has been capable of replicating the process from the very first step to the very last step - it's unique to get the whole process happening before your eyes."

The study, published in the journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, was done with mice but the scientists believe it is only a matter to time before they are able to reproduce the same process of development with human brain cells.

The findings, in effect, show it is possible to construct an assembly line for manufacturing unlimited quantities of human brain cells, or neurons, Dr Scheffler said.

"We can basically take these cells and freeze them until we need them. Then we thaw them, begin a cell-generating process and produce a ton of new neurons."

Professor Dennis Steindler, who led the Florida research team, said the strength of the technique lay in its ability to identify vital stem cells that have the power to grow into adult brain cells.

"We've isolated for the first time what appears to be the true candidate stem cell," Professor Steindler said. "There have been other candidates but, in this case, we used a special microscope that allows us to watch living cells over long periods of time."

"So we've actually witnessed the stem cell give rise to new neurons. We've watched it under a living microscope generate brand new neurons."

"For many years, different groups—including mine—have claimed we're getting close to identifying the true stem cell progenitor, characterizing it and watching its magic."

"What we've learnt from the 50 years of research into bone marrow and blood stem cells is to be extremely careful in claiming we've got the mother of all stem cells in adult brain tissue," he said.

Time-lapse images taken by the scientists show how simple, immature stem cells gradually develop and grow into the fully functioning cell—vital to the healthy functioning of the brain.

"Now we can make a lot of brain cells from just a very small number of these stem cells, which is great because we'd have to do that to repair neurological disease," Professor Steindler said.

Another possibility is to use the technique as a model of natural brain repair so that scientists can test potential drugs for stimulating the regrowth of damaged nerves.

"We are already beginning the process of screening for compounds that will allow this to happen perhaps without sticking anything into our brains," Professor Steindler said.

"It's been the goal of this field of stem cell biology and regenerative medicine to get us closer to being able to pop a pill in your mouth when you have a neurological disorder that has a specific action on your own indigenous stem cell population."

"This is getting us one step closer to that because we can now produce large quantities of brain cells at will and we can now manipulate them in the laboratory.

"The home run is that we will find drugs to mobilize our own population [of brain stem cells], which is what this study is focusing on."

"I'm quite optimistic we will translate this to human therapeutics in the very near future," he added. "Because advances in the field of regenerative medicine are occurring so quickly at the moment, it could be anytime. It could be next week, it could be ten years. I'd like it to be next week."

PUBLIC OUTCRY AGAINST THE THE CATERPILLAR CORPORATION AND THE DESTRUCTION OF PALESTINIAN HOMES

New York City activists on behalf of Palestinian rights brought their message to the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel, where an executive from Caterpillar was scheduled to appear on a panel about social responsibility and sustainability. The rally excited police attention but no arrests. Later, while the CAT exec's talk was underway, an activist was arrested attempting to make a presentation to the same audience on CAT's role in Israel's ongoing campaign to destroy Palestinian homes, while another activist leafleted the conference attendees.

Latest information is that the arrested activist was taken to Manhattan North precinct, to be charged by the hotel with trespass.

In Israel/Palestine, CAT has clearly overwhelmingly chosen business value over social responsibility. The D9 and D10 bulldozers that CAT sells to the Israel government are designed specifically to destroy Palestinian land, roads, water supplies, and sewer systems and to uproot hundreds of thousands of fruit and olive trees—the main livelihood for many Palestinians.

In recent weeks the Israeli government has announced plans to demolish 88 more Palestinian homes in East Jerusalem using Caterpillar bulldozers, as Israel continues to bulldoze Palestinian homes throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territories. According to the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions, "Since 1967 Israel has demolished almost 12,000 Palestinian homes, leaving some 70,000 without shelter and traumatized." CAT bulldozers have helped to facilitate Israel's policy of sustained destruction of the Palestinian economy and communities.

HALLIBURTON UNIT GETS GUANTANAMO CONTRACT

AP

A subsidiary of Houston-based Halliburton has been awarded $30 million to build a 220-bed prison for terrorism suspects at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, the Pentagon announced.

Congress previously approved the funding for the construction job. Some members, along with human rights groups, are now calling for Guantanamo to close because of reports of prisoner abuses there and because the foreign detainees are being held indefinitely with no charges filed.

"The future detention facility will be based on prison models in the US and is designed to be safer for the long-term detention of detainees and the guards," according to a statement provided by a Pentagon spokesman. "It is also expected to require less manpower to operate."

The new prison building, called Detention Camp 6, will replace some of the older facilities at the Navy base, which officials say are not adequate for holding prisoners for the long term.

The job is part of a larger contract that could be worth up to $500 million through 2010, the Pentagon said. The Naval Facilities Engineering Command,

Atlantic, in Norfolk, Va., is the contracting agency.

Sen. Frank Lautenberg, D-NJ, issued a statement criticizing the deal, calling Halliburton the "scandal-plagued former employer of Vice President Cheney." Lautenberg has sought hearings into the contracts awarded to Halliburton for work in Iraq.

UK FIRMS TAG WORKERS TO IMPROVE EFFICIENCY

The Guardian

Workers in warehouses across Britain are being "electronically tagged" by being asked to wear small computers to cut costs and increase the efficient delivery of goods and food to supermarkets, a report revealed yesterday.

New US satellite and radio-based computer technology is turning some workplaces into "battery farms" and creating conditions similar to "prison surveillance," according to a report from Michael Blakemore, professor of geography at Durham University.

The technology, introduced six months ago, is spreading rapidly, with up to 10,000 employees using it to supply household names such as Tesco, Sainsbury's, Asda, Boots and Marks & Spencer.

Now trade unionists want safeguards to be introduced to protect worker privacy. Under the system workers are asked to wear computers on their wrists, arms and fingers, and in some cases to put on a vest containing a computer which instructs them where to go to collect goods from warehouse shelves.

The system also allows supermarkets direct access to the individual's computer so orders can be beamed from the store. The computer can also check on whether workers are taking unauthorized breaks and work out the shortest time a worker needs to complete a job.

Academics are worried that the system could make Britain the most surveyed society in the world. The country already has the largest number of street security cameras.

Martin Dodge, a researcher at the center for advanced spatial analysis at University College London, said: "These devices mark the total 'disappearance of disappearance' where the employee is unable to do anything without the machine knowing or monitoring."

In his report for the GMB union, Prof Blakemore said the new technology was raising a host of ethical issues, with the danger that the computer was taking over the human rather than humans using computers.

There is also concern that the new technology might create new industrial injuries because of the need for workers to make repetitive movements with their arms and wrists, similar to repetitive strain injuries c caused by overusing computers.

But the companies say the system makes the delivery of food more efficient, cuts out waste, reduces theft and can reorder goods more quickly.

One firm, Peacock Retail Group, claims workers like the system. The company, which has a modern center in Nantgar, south Wales, where employees have 28 wearable computers and six mounted on trucks, says the system has a positive impact on team morale. "Everybody likes the wearables because they are comfortable and easy to use. The result is the team finds it easier to do the job," it says on the company website.

A spokeswoman for Tesco insisted that the company was not using the technology to monitor the staff and said it was making employees' work easier and reducing the need for paper.

But at the GMB's annual conference in Newcastle yesterday one of the union's national officers, Paul Campbell, said: "We are having reports of people walking out of jobs after a few days' work, in some cases just a few hours. They are all saying that they don't like the job because they have no input. They just followed a computer's instructions."

Paul Kenny, acting general secretary, said: "The GMB is no Luddite organization but we will not stand idly by to see our members reduced to automatons. The use of this technology needs to be redesigned to be an aid to the worker rather than making the worker its slave."

"The supermarkets that rely on just-in-time shelf-filling rather than holding buffer stocks are incredibly profitable companies. They can well afford to operate a humanized supply team."

Other monitoring devices are being developed in the US, including ones that can check on the productivity of secretaries by measuring the number of keystrokes on their word processors; satellite technology is also being developed to monitor productivity in manufacturing jobs.

Two London firms are considering using satellites to direct sandwich board holders, making sure they are not shirking and moving them to areas with more people.

IN PROTEST OF RACIST DANISH IMMIGRATION LAW

www.timesonline.co.uk

DENMARK'S cozy idyll of bicycling monarchs and accessible politicians was shattered by the torching of the Immigration Minister's car.

Flames spread from the garage of Rikke Hvilshøj, the Minister, and engulfed the roof of her home but no one was hurt. Anarchists opposed to Denmark's tough asylum laws claimed responsibility.

"We heard a large explosion and my family got out of the home," said Ms Hvilshøj, 34, who has presided over some of the harshest immigration policies in Europe. Anders Fogh Rasmussen, the Prime Minister, said that he had received the news "with the greatest disgust and regret."

The Minister and her two young children have been moved to a secret location. Bodyguards, who are normally given only on an ad hoc basis to Danish politicians, were yesterday assigned to all Cabinet Ministers. Ms Hvilshøj was seen outside Parliament with two police escorts.

The attack reminded Danes of the fatal stabbing of Anna Lindh, the Swedish Foreign Minister, in 2003. Ms Lindh was killed while shopping in central Stockholm, unaccompanied by a body guard. The murder sent shock waves throughout Scandinavia and showed how Sweden's open society was uncomfortable in an age of terrorist threat.

Although Denmark was stunned by the Lindh murder it refused to go down the Swedish route and tighten politicians' security. One opinion poll showed that two thirds of Danes thought similar political violence could occur in their own country, yet only 27 per cent thought ministers should be allowed bodyguards.

Mads Stenbjerre, the head of research at Copenhagen's Zapera Polling Institute, said: "Danes place the openness of society above the threat of attacks on politicians."

The informal relationship between politicians and the voters is part of Danish culture. Children walk to school on their own, Parliament can be visited without elaborate security checks, ministers cycle between appointments and Queen Margrethe goes shopping in Copenhagen or Aarhus with friends and courtiers, rather than policemen.

Workindenmark.dk, a government-backed Internet guide for foreigners, claims: "Even famous business executives here do not feel the need to surround themselves with bodyguards."

But the passion stirred by Denmark's immigration rules is strong. Five years ago a car belonging to the head of the Danish immigration service was firebombed. The latest attack was organized by a group calling itself "Action Group Border-less Beate."

Denmark's immigration laws have cut benefits to foreigners, restricted the right to marry, and discouraged the arrival of any refugee over the age of 60. Spouses are not allowed to join their partners in Denmark unless they have a sufficiently large apartment and income.

A foreigner based in Denmark must have at least 7,000 krone (£630) in his Danish bank account before he can even ask to bring his wife into the country.

A foreigner also has to pass a test equivalent to the linguistic ability of a 14-year-old Danish child to get residence.

FIVE ANARCHISTS ARRESTED IN LEECE

In a massive show of force, the Digos (Italian political police) arrested five anarchists in Lecce, Italy. The arrested are Annalisa Capone, Angela Marina Ferrari (Marina), Cristian Palladini, Salvatore Signore and Saverio Pellegrino.

The police show of force in this situation could appear absurd. In operation "nighttime," as the cops termed this series of raids, searches and arrests, one hundred and fifty cops were deployed in the region of Lecce alone. These included canine units, border cops, postal cops, units from the Central Antiterrorism service, bomb specialists, a helicopter and so on.

Charges against the arrested anarchists include: subversive association with the intent of terrorism and the subversion of the democratic state; attacks against the Cathedral of Lecce and Father Cesare Lodeserto's house; Lodeserto was the director of the "Center for Temporary Residence" (CPT, i.e., concentration camp for undocumented immigrants) in San Foca, Lecce, until he was arrested for private violence and kidnapping in relation to his treatment of inmates at the "center"; instigation to revolt, during a march in front of the CPT that ended in conflicts; attacks against ATMs of Banca Intesa, where the Regina Pacis Foundation, the organization through which the good priest ran the concentration camp in San Foca, kept their funds; telephone "harassment" against collaborators in maintaining the operation of the CPT; "defamation" of these collaborators in flyers; dirtying the entrance of the house of one of these collaborators with paint; organizing an unauthorized march against the Benetton corporation that is taking over large portions of Patagonia (the southern portion of Chile and Argentina) and driving the Mapuche people off their land; dirtying the windows of a shop owned by Benetton; damaging pumps at an Esso gas station; Esso is the European branch of Exxon, fuel suppliers for the war in Iraq and Afghanistan; occupying the empty and unused space, Capolinea; writing messages on walls. These charges refer to actions that have taken place over the past two years.

In addition to these arrests, ten other people were informed that they were under investigation, eight for subversive association with the intent of terrorism and two for unauthorized demonstration. The cops closed down and seized the anarchist occupied space, Capolinea, and carried out searches against anarchists all over Italy (in Lecce, Aosta, Turin, Trento, Trieste, Chieti, Cagliari, Taranto and Catania).

The real crime of the comrades of Lecce is that they have quite openly expressed their solidarity with rebelling immigrants in the CPTs and with the Mapuche fighting against being dispossessed in South America, as well as their disgust for the war in Iraq. In doing so, they have recognized what they have in common with the undocumented immigrants, the Mapuches losing their land and the Iraqis having their homes destroyed before their very eyes by self-proclaimed "liberators" – that they too are among the dispossessed and exploited who increasingly have no place in this world, no home, who are strangers everywhere they go.

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FRAUD IN IRANIAN ELECTIONS?

Iran: As Winners Head For Runoff, Losers Complain Of Fraud
from www.payvand.com

Tehran, Iran. Two of the losing candidates in Iran's ninth presidential election on June 17th have complained of military interference in the election, with one calling on the country's supreme leader to intervene and another warning of a fascistic trend in the country's politics.

The overall process has resulted in a first for the Islamic republic, where a presidential runoff was required because none of the candidates earned more than half of the votes cast. Expediency Council Chairman Ayatollah Ali-Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani was slated to face Tehran Mayor Mahmud Ahmadinejad in the runoff scheduled for June 24th.

But voter turnout was better than in many other presidential elections, and this could have a tremendous impact in the runoff.

The purported third-place finisher, Hojatoleslam Mehdi Mahdavi-Karrubi, complained on June 18th about the behavior of the Guardians Council, which is supposed to supervise the election, IRNA and ILNA reported. He called on Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei to appoint a special team to investigate the vote-counting process. "Had the Guardians Council had the authority, it would have ordered Ahmadinejad to be elected without even considering the votes," Mahdavi-Karrubi said. Mahdavi-Karrubi said he spoke with Interior Minister Abdolvahed Musavi-Lari and urged him not to extend the polling hours because of the possibility of fraud. Musavi-Lari reportedly shared this concern but said he was under pressure to keep the polls open.

Mahdavi-Karrubi also referred to alleged interference by the military in the election, IRNA and ILNA reported. "We will prove that the heads of the [Islamic Revolution] Guards Corps had delivered speeches in many places in support of certain candidates," Mahdavi-Karrubi said. Referring to Basij Resistance Force commander Mohammad Hejazi, he said, "If Mr. Hejazi wants to form a party and make Basij his party, he should become the secretary-general of Basij."

Elaheh Kulyai, who is the spokesman for fifth-place finisher Mustafa Moin, also complained on June 18th that Basij personnel interfered with the vote counting, IRNA reported. After the preliminary election results were announced, Moin released a statement in which he described interference in the election process, ILNA reported.

"A powerful will entered the arena bent on the victory of a particular candidate and the elimination of the other candidates and opened the way to the organization of some military bodies and the support of the election supervisory apparatus, so that the self-evident rights of the other candidates could be targeted," Moin said in his statement. "Today, anyone can clearly see the effect of this organized interference on the election results."

"The warning bell has sounded for our fledgling democracy," Moin cautioned. He warned that such events will "lead to militarism, authoritarianism, and narrow-mindedness in this country," and he mentioned "the danger of fascism." "Organized military and supervisory interference in the elections has consequences beyond the violation of the rights of people who voted for me and the likes of me," he said, adding, "I declare that this is a threat to the people's choice and free elections."

Moin's main backers also expressed their disgruntlement. The Mujahedin of the Islamic Revolution Organization is one of the main pro-Moin parties, and central council member Seyyed Hashemi Hedayati said the presence of Basij personnel near the ballot boxes was alarming, ILNA reported. "Since a few days ago we have witnessed the systematic organization of the police and Basij and in such a situation we have the right to doubt the outcome of the presidential election," he added.

The Election Headquarters at the Iranian Interior Ministry announced the results on June 18th. None of the candidates secured the minimum of 50 percent-plus of the votes that are required to win outright.

Then came former parliamentary speaker Mahdavi-Karrubi with 5,066,316 votes; former national police chief Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf with 4,075,189 votes; and former Science, Research, and Technology Minister Moin with 4,054,304 votes. Trailing far behind were former state radio and television chief Ali Larijani with 1,740,163 votes, and Vice-President for Physical
Training Mohsen Mehralizadeh with 1,289,323 votes.

The election results are not final until the Guardians Council announces them. Council spokesman Gholam Hussein Elham said on June 18th that candidates had three days to lodge their complaints, Mehr news agency reported.

It was unlikely that Karrubi's entreaty or any other complaints would resonate with Supreme Leader Khamenei, who one day before the election urged Iranians to vote. A June 18th statement from Khamenei praised Iranians for their participation in the election, Mehr News Agency reported. "This foiled enemy plots against Iran," he said. Referring to a June 16th White House statement that criticized the election process, Khamenei said, "You, the dear nation, you, the committed and enthusiastic youth, you, the faithful men and women, through your wise and epic presence, made [US President George W.] Bush's insults backfire and showed your strong dedication to the country's independence, the defense of Islam, and Islamic democracy."

According to the Election Headquarters on June 18th, a total of 29,439,982 votes were cast in the election. There are 46,786,418 eligible voters, so this puts turnout at almost 63 percent. This turnout equaled that of the 2001 election and surpassed that of the 1985, 1989, and 1993 elections, implying that calls for an election boycott fell on deaf ears.

Further breaking down the turnout figure, the election headquarters counted 29,317,042 correct ballots and another 1,221,940 spoiled ballots (approximately 4 percent). Casting spoiled or blank ballots is a traditional form of protest by individuals who are compelled to vote. Election-day photographs showed military personnel at polling places, and this suggests that voter intimidation could occur or the vote counting could be manipulated. In the absence of independent observers, however, it is impossible to determine whether fraud occurred. It is extremely unlikely that anything will come of the allegations of fraud, because nothing has come of previous allegations.

DANGEROUS LEVELS OF DESERTIFICATION

DESERTS SET TO EXPAND

Michael Hopkin, from www.nature.com

Many of the world's dry regions, currently home to some 2.1 billion people, are in danger of becoming useless for growing food, according to the latest in a series of reports on the world's ecosystems. It blames climate change and human activities.

The report's authors estimate that 10-20% of these "drylands" have already lost some plant life or economic use, and they say the situation is getting worse. Hundreds of thousands of people will be in need of new homes and lifestyles over the next 30 years, they estimate.

The report, titled *Ecosystems and Human Well-Being: Desertification Synthesis*1, is the third in a series of seven detailing the findings of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, a four-year, $22-million stock-take of the world's biological resources.

The assessment aims to compile all of the available data from previous studies to give the most accurate picture yet of the condition of the world's ecosystems. In the case of drylands it highlights the lack of knowledge about these regions, which cover 41% of the planet's land surface. They include everything from the "dry-sub-humid" regions of eastern Mediterranean croplands, to full-blown "hyper-arid" deserts such as the Sahara.

Desertification has emerged as an immense global problem that affects a lot of people.

"There are serious gaps in our understanding of how big deserts are, and how they are growing," says Zafar Adeel, assistant director of the United Nations University International Network on Water, Environment and Health in Hamilton, Canada, and one of the report's main authors.

What is clear, however, is that deserts are getting bigger. "Desertification has emerged as an immense global problem that affects a lot of people," Adeel says. Dust storms from the Gobi Desert in Asia and the African Sahara are responsible for respiratory problems as far afield as North America, the report says.

Fields of dreams

Perhaps the biggest problem, however, is that as land dries up it becomes unsuitable for farming. The problem is worsened by the fact that many of the areas at greatest risk, such as central Asia and regions to the north and south of the Sahara, are home to the world's poorest people. "Without strong efforts to reverse desertification, some of the gains we've seen in development in these regions may be reversed," Adeel says.

The report's release comes ahead of the World Day to Combat Desertification on 17 June. This day marks the 11th birthday of a United Nations agreement, signed by 191 countries, to tackle the expansion of deserts. But, says Adeel, previous efforts have been hampered by ignorance of the scale of the problem.

Solutions should be tailored to individual countries' situations, the authors recommend. They hope that governments of countries at risk of drying up will promote "alternative livelihoods" that protect dry regions.

This could involve investment in ecotourism rather than farming, Adeel suggests. Other possibilities involve embracing solar power, or farming fish rather than irrigating crops, which turns out to be a more efficient way of wringing food and money from a limited amount of water.

Walter Reid, director of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, estimates it might take US$100 billion to invest properly in dryland areas. "That's substantial. But relative to other areas where public money is spent it's not such a big deal," says Reid.

AIDS DRUG EXPERIMENTS ON FOSTER CARE CHILDREN

AP

On March 10, 2004, The Alliance for Human Research Protection filed a complaint with the FDA and the federal Office of Human Research Protection about a series of AIDS drug experiments conducted on New York City children in foster care. That complaint prompted two separate investigations by the FDA and OHRP, which are still on-going.

Articles in The New York Post and a documentary by BBC raised the alarm among the African-American and Latino community in NY-some of who have been protesting weekly in front of Incarnation Children's Center, the site of some of the drug experiments.

The Associated Press AP has just released its investigative report: the problem is a national scandal—the experiments were conducted in "at least seven states—Illinois, Louisiana, Maryland, New York, North Carolina, Colorado and Texas—and involved more than four dozen different studies.

AP's investigation found that 13,878 children had been enrolled in pediatric AIDS studies funded by the government since the late 1980s. Of these, officials estimated that 5 percent to 10 percent were in foster care. Their age ranged from infants to late teens.

"More than two dozen Illinois foster children remain in studies today."

Those who conducted the experiments in violation of federal regulations, are supported by taxpayers—thus they have a public responsibility which they violated. The children who were targeted to serve as human drug testing subjects—mostly poor children of color—were not afforded the protection of a personal advocate—as is mandated by federal regulations. (45 Code of Federal Regulations 46.409) The institutional culture of arrogance is demonstrably in evidence at both medical research centers and government agencies: "Our position is that advocates weren't need
ed," said Marilyn Castaldi, spokeswoman for Columbia Presbyterian Medical Center in
New York.

And officials of NYC Administration of Child Services "Defend the decision to enlist foster children en masse, saying there was a crisis in the early 1990s and research provided the best treatment possibilities."

The children are reported to have suffered painful side effects "such as rashes, vomiting, and sharp drops in infection-fighting blood cells as they tested antiretroviral drugs to suppress AIDS or other medicines to treat secondary infections."

In one study testing the drug Dapsone, "At least ten children died from a variety of causes, including four from blood poisoning, and researchers said they were unable to determine a safe, useful dosage. They said the deaths didn't appear to be "directly attributable" to Dapsone but nonetheless were "disturbing."

"Overall mortality while receiving the study drug was significantly higher in the daily Dapsone group. This finding remains unexplained," the researchers concluded.

"Another study involving foster children in the 1990s treated children with different combinations of adult antiretroviral drugs. Among 52 children, there were 26 moderate to severe reactions—nearly all in infants. The side effects included rash, fever, and a major drop in infection-fighting white blood cells.

Not addressed in the AP report is the amount of money that these trials generated for the institutions involved in the experiments.

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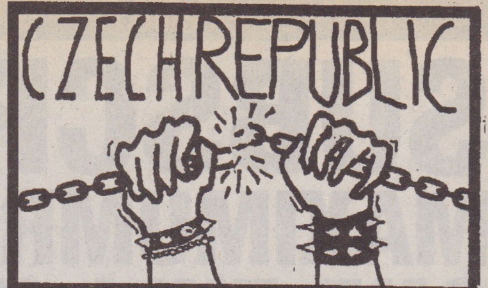

Scene Report from Czech Republic

It was I who submitted the Czech Republic scene report for *MRR* issue #254 (August 2004), and back then I thought I would be able to send some news more often. Unfortunately, there was no way as there is so much to do and also I am not so sure about your interest since the ex-East European hardcore/punk scene was not, is not and probably never will be so cool or trendy for most of you.

Since my last report there have been tons of new records released, a few European tours and others split up. I will start with the more established and better-known bands.

BASTO

MALIGNANT TUMOUR is touring Europe as I write this, with a few gigs in the UK as well. Last year they toured Southern Europe-Yugoslavia, Greece, Italy, Turkey etc.-with MASS GENOCIDE PROCESS, then released a split EP with LYCANTHROPHY (on Insane Society Records), changed drummers, and recently recorded their second full length. It's out on CD now, vinyl version will follow soon, and again on Insane Society. I have heard only a few songs from it and I have to say that it's probably their best stuff so far. They've been active since the early 90s without a break! All I can say is if you like MOTORHEAD, SODOM or VENOM mixed with Scandi-crust (UNCURBED, MEANWHILE), go for it! You won't be disappointed. By the way the name of the record is *Burn In Hell*. Contact: www.insane-society.net/malignant

INNOXIA CORPORA is probably the only Czech band with a record that was listed in more than one MRR top ten chart for their first LP on Malarie Records in 2002. Now there is a brand new LP/CD called *Kcertu* ("Hell"). Their original singer left a while ago, so now the rest of the band shares vocal duties. Musically it's still the same hard-driving punk with interesting guitar melodies and a strong touch of Eastern European punk rock, like old Czechoslovakian/Polish bands FPB and DEZERTER. They have very poetic lyrics and a pretty strong sound. Vinyl version was released in cooperation of many labels, including Malarie and Impregnate Noise Laboratories. I think that they plan to tour Europe again with the new LP out, so probably in the summer or second half of 2005…? Contact: www.innoxia-corpora.wz.cz

MASS GENOCIDE PROCESS

COMPLICITE CANDIDE is from the same neighborhood as INNOXIA and also has a new record out, but only a split EP with BALACLAVA. They've already released two full LPs and a 10". They also found a new bass player, so after a two-year hiatus they are back in full force. I saw two gigs since their reformation and they smoked each time. The best Czech punk band without a doubt! I don't understand why they are so underrated, maybe because of the sound quality of their records? Each of them was recorded on analog equipment at the guitar player's Moc Plevele studio. Anyway, if you are into a STOOGES-WIRE-DEAD KENNEDYS mixed with a guitar player who could be the second Jimi Hendrix, make sure to check them out! Their two songs on the split EP with BALACLAVA are both great! In the works is a new LP, a split with earlier recordings of their previous band, 77, but it may not be out for a while. Contact: www.complicite-candide.wz.cz

MASS GENOCIDE PROCESS is by far the most active Czech band of the last few months. They've managed to release three new records in four months! The first was a split EP with local death metal heroes ALAMOGORDO, then a split LP with Belgium crusties VISIONS OF WAR, and just last week a split EP with SEE YOU IN HELL. All these platters were co-released by drummer Bohdan's label Impregnate Noise Laboratories (www.impregnate.wz.cz). MGP is probably currently the best crust band from Czech with their heavy dose of Scandi-crust with some BOLT THROWER influences thrown in. They are also very active in organizing gigs, tours, and heavy drinking. Bohdan also does a great, free, bi-monthly newsletter called *Killed By Noise* with a print run of several thousand copies, and can send him your stuff for review. MGP toured Germany and the Netherlands around Christmas 2004, and at the end of May will play a few gigs in Italy. In September they will do a longer tour around Europe. You

can check out their website through Impregnate's web.

HOMO CONSUMENS did a two-week European tour with SEE YOU IN HELL in September 2004, and released a split EP on Impregnate Noise Laboratories only a few days before they left. The new release is a split with AD CALENDAS GRAECAS. While A.C.G. sound experimental on it, in comparison to their great LP from last year, HOMO CONSUMENS kill your ears with eight songs of raw punk in the fine tradition of WRETCHED, BGK and MOB 47. There will be another European tour with SYIH planned for this September and a third split EP in the works, but this time with YARVAR COOCHA from the same region who also play fast hardcore-punk reminding me of DISAFFECT. Contact HOMO CONSUMENS: homoconsumens@seznam.cz

LYCANTHROPHY kicked out their old singer (ex-MRTVA BUDOUCNOST vocalist, Marsta) last summer and now has the singer from INKOGRUENCE screaming the most extreme female vocals you'll ever hear! They play now spastic fastcore reminding me of bands like DESPISE YOU. A split EP with MALIGNANT TUMOUR is out and more releases are planned. Also, they will do the Italian trip with MGP. Singer Ondra runs Out Of Control Records, *Go And Kill* zine, and will co-organize the second *Play Fast Or Don't Fest*, which will take place in Pardubice at August 19-20. Contact: www.lycanthrophy.wz.cz

VIR is still without any official recordings-a long awaited split EP on the Insane Society label with the no longer together DREAD 101 is still not out-but they completed a terrific two-week UK tour in March 2005. They massacred their English and Scottish audiences well with their heavy crust assault. Contact: papirna@post.cz

GRIDE almost disbanded for the second time during 2004, when they asked both their guitar players to quit. But, they were save by two new members from DEZINFEKCE and are now in full force again. They played their first gig after a six-month pause last weekend and now are closer to thrashcore. There is a plan for a split EP with LAHAR of cover songs of old Czech hardcore-punk bands. They should definitely record some new stuff since the last shit they did is from 2003. Their discography CD received well deserved praises in recent MRR issues and is available from Plazzma Records (plazzma@centrum.cz). I am not sure about any further plans for GRIDE releases besides the split EP with LAHAR. You can contact GRIDE's singer Iny here: gride.core@worldonline.cz

LAHAR is easily GRIDE's most serious competitor for title of Fastest Czech Band with their blazing, extreme HC. It is a big shame that they don't have more releases out, only compilation tracks and a split tape of their 2003 demo with NESOUCAST STROJE, a benefit for cultural activities. LAHAR does cover songs of HELLNATION and INFEST, which should give you an idea about their sound. A split ten-inch with IDIOT SAVANT from Germany (on singer's Samuel Records and other labels) should be out soon, the already mentioned split EP with GRIDE will follow. There was some talk about a full EP on 625 Productions and another split EP with RABIES. We shall see. LAHAR plays around Czech all the time and did a few short tours to Germany and Poland. Also, for the past few years they have organized many gigs in their hometown of Pisek. Unfortunately, the cool Paluba pub has just closed. Contact: www.sweb.cz/samuel.records

DEZINFEKCE released their first full LP, after more than 10 years of existence, called *Staci Najit Duvod* last year on Pohoda Records. They play heavy hardcore-punk, which was compared to POISON IDEA in *MRR*, and supported THE EXPLOITED a while ago. Contact: www.dezinfekce.hyperlinx.cz

RABIES completed their third split EP recently, this time with DISTURBANCE PROJECT from Spain (ex-DENAK members). Their previous records were splits with DEN ZA DNEM and CAD. RABIES started as a noisecore band, later played grinding-punk and more recently has switched to power violence/fastcore. I haven't heard their latest output, so I can't comment on it, but rumors say are it's pretty good. They mostly play locally around the South-Czech region, where GRIDE, LAHAR, and DEZINFEKCE all come from. Contact: rabies-noise@volny.cz

SICHERHATE SYSTEM underwent some minor line-up changes recently and completed a Czech mini-tour with SEE YOU IN HELL with the brand new line-up. For a band playing for around ten years they are criminally unappreciated, which may be the reason for almost no releases—two demos and a few songs on V/A – *Dying Alive/Living Dead* LP. They don't play many shows so that may have something to do with it too. But, very soon there should be the long promised split ten-inch with NESOUCAST STROJE released on Out Of Control Records. Hopefully more people will soon have the opportunity to check out their raw punk attack that sounds like old Finnish punk and BLACK FLAG's *First Four Years* collection. Contact: miv@email.cz

For almost ten years SHEEVA YOGA has played their brand of demented power violence/jazz/experimental HC, akin to a freakier SPAZZ or the mid 90s Canadian band MEXICAN POWER AUTHORITY. Last year they put out split seven-inch with MORE BAD NEWS and recently their first full CD. They were supposed to tour Europe with MBN, but I have heard that the tour was cancelled. Contact: www.sheevayoga.czechcore.cz

THEMA 11 is another veteran band of the Czech scene playing since the mid 90s, with their most recent release an LP entitled *Choose Your Beast*. But, there is a four-way split CD on Impure Music from France out soon that they're on. Also, a very active touring band playing abroad constantly including two gigs in Moscow last year! They still play their very own brand of slow, depressing HC with three guitars, and sometimes two drummers, sounding like a wall of noise. Contact: http://thema11.czechcore.cz

BALACLAVA did the previously mentioned split seven-inch with CO-CA after an inactive period. They are more or less back in the action. They play at Prague's 007 Club mostly, where the singer organizes animal rights benefit gigs. Musically they've *evolved* from an aggressive, '88, youthcrew style, to a more new-school metal style after the second guitar player was added. I have no idea about

BALACLAVA

SEE YOU IN HELL

any future releases. Contact: www.balaclava.wz.cz

INGROWING is borderline death metal, but some grindcore can be still found in their music. (They do *Corporation Pull-in* by TERRORIZER.) They are also a pretty old band and one of the most famous of this style out of Czech. They managed to tour far-east Asia back in February, destroying their audiences in Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, and Bali along the way. Their last full CD, *Sunrape,* was released on their own label Obscene Production (www.obscene.cz), which has released an old and unreleased collection of their stuff called *Decameron Of Grind*. A new CD is scheduled for the end of 2005. Contact: www.ingrowing.wz.cz

NEEDFUL THINGS, who is sometimes compared to WARSORE, plays bulldozing grindcore, but in the old school way. A few split EPs are out with the most recent one with Polish gore-grind masters SQUASH BOWELS on the bass-player's Psychotherapy Records. NT also did a short Euro tour with SEWN SHUT from Sweden last year and I have heard their full LP/CD, *Dead Point*, and split EP with MESRINE should be expected soon. Otto is co-organizing the *Play Fast Or Don't Vol.2* fest. Contact: www.needfulthings.wz.cz

GOSPEL OF THE FUTURE released their first full EP on the guitarist's Electric Digit Records. I haven't heard it yet, but it's rumored to be a mix of chaotic hardcore with sludge parts. Ex-members of MINDLOCK and MASS GENOCIDE PROCESS here, but the band is not very active, though they're planning an LP on Damage Done, as the singer is out of the country for most of the year driving wealthy American bands around Europe in a van. He does the zine *Fragile*. Contact: www.gospelofthefuture.wz.cz

KOBRA 11 comes from the most northern part of Czech, where there are a few active bands-NOT, STILL STRONG, X-WING-who recently released a seven-inch compilation called *Northcore Still Kicks Ass!* This part of Czech is kind of isolated from the rest of the country, so it's great to see such an effort. Their noisy dual vocal, grind-HC reminds me of MONSTER X very much-they even do MONSTER X cover songs! Full tape out now, co-release with a Russian label, and a split EP with S.I.K.A. from Slovakia's capital. Contact: drogyzabiji@napis.to

NEMA BARIKADA has finally released a split EP with RED INSECT. They have changed their style, closer to metallic crust with multiple, hysterical vocals and weird solos. I am not sure about their future plans. Contact: http://nemabarikada.czechcore.cz

Dead bands/new bands

Some bands did split up during last year: SPACE TO BEING played their farewell show at *No Speed Limit Fiesta* here in Brno, leaving, a pretty good split seven-inch with TASTE OF FLESH; VYBOR VEREJNEHO BLAHA (V.V.B.) played an interesting mix of hip-hop and punk with great political lyrics, but decided to quit after releasing the excellent *Vraha hledej v sobe* LP in summer, 04; KEVORKIAN from Czech Rep's released two full EPs, a split and full LP, and one Euro-tour in 2003, playing *San Diego style,* UNBROKEN influenced HC at the end of the 90s, and later changed to a more metal direction; X-WING who only recently called it quits played orthodox, 88, straightedge hardcore in the vein of OUTLAST, and only released a demo and compilation tracks; I am not 100% sure about the current status of NESOUCAST STROJE, but they have not played for a year and talked about splitting up; DREAD 101 really did break up in autumn, 2003-stop asking.

No less than four (!) new bands came out of DREAD 101's ashes have emerged: VIR, who I've already talked about; NON-COMMITAL who I haven't heard but will soon-crust with dual vocals; GUIDED CRADLE; and SPES EREPTA. I will write about the last two because I am more familiar with them. GUIDED CRADLE began playing live in summer 2004 and immediately became popular with their well-crafted, dual guitar, heavy crust full of solos, and TRAGEDY-esque harmonies. Both axes are played by foreign immigrants who are currently staying in Prague: Austin from the USA who used to play in an emo band called K10 PROSPECT; and Ethan from Scotland, ex-DREAD 101. The rhythm section of VIR, completes the line-up. Full LP/CD was just recorded and will be released on a new label from Prague called Damage Done Records. GUIDED CRADLE is recommended to fans of WOLFBRIGADE and other currently popular bands! Check out www.guidedcradle.com. SPES EREPTA is another brand-new band, with ex-DREAD 101's drummer beating the skins here, and the vocals are handled by Milan of BALACLAVA and guitar is played

by BALACLAVA's bass-player. I saw them open for VICTIMS and it wasn't so hot, just a poor attempt at furious crust, but with the 88, straightedge, *old school* sound. I am sure that they will become better and evolve with time. Contact: spesxerepta@tiscali.cz.

All these bands come from Prague and there's another new band called WHO ATE MY SKATE?, who is a very young band playing fast, melodic hardcore with influences of ska and thrash. Contact: www.wams.czechcore.cz. DEGENERACE is another young band, this time but come from an area near Pardubice city. They are going straight for your throat with their KUOLEMA/SEKUNDA worship; it's total noise/crust/horror with high-screeching vocals. No releases yet, but the members are involved in the *Crusties Hell* gig collective, putting on concerts every month in their village. STOLEN LIVES comes from the same region, but is much more palatable to your ears with their attempt at fast hardcore with a touch of thrash and melody, sounding a bit like SEPARATION or DEMON SYSTEM 13. Another very young band and CD-R demo recently released. Contact: www.stolenlivesband.com. Back to the noise…PRUMYSLOVA SMRT from Jihlava plays distorted, noisy fastcore, and has a few demos out. However, they are even faster than on these old recordings! They managed to tour Germany for two weeks back in April. Hopefully we will see some vinyl out soon. Guitar player Johan is also a very active gig organizer in their area. Contact: www.prumyslovasmrt.wz.cz. Some more new bands: KOMPLEX VINY—raw punk, tape out now on Phobia; POSLEDNI PRANI MRTVEHO HUMANISTY—old school noisecore from Pisek; GREX–dual vocal crustcore from the same town (both bands are on a split tape on Impregnate Noise Laboratories); KARL MARX—emo in the vein of 90s French bands FINGERPRINT, UNDONE, etc., featuring THEMA 11 members, RE-INTOXICATION–crust/grind with dual vocals.

VAP (VOICE OF ANARCHO-PACIFISM), from Prague, is not a new band, but reformed last year, with their CONFLICT influenced sound; their drummer organized a few CONFLICT gigs here. Contact: www.vap.punkmusic.cz.

Distort Brno! Portland – Osaka – Brno!!!

Since I love my hometown so much, I can't resist but to dedicate a special space in this report right here to Brno. As far as I can remember we now have had the best hardcore-punk scene we've ever had here with around a dozen or more active bands and a stable gig place.

Since summer 2002 the local hardcore-punk scene has utilized the fine services of the Yacht Club, located in the northern suburb of the city. Two organizations: Loser Crew, who did gigs for bands like ZEGOTA, FACE DOWN IN SHIT, RATOS DE PORAO, CURSED, SEX POSITIONS in autumn 04/spring 05; and United Crusties are most active in setting up shows. Since I am a part of the latter one, I will talk more about it. We book crust/raw punk/thrash/extreme HC gigs exclusively, usually once a month. Last year we did the two-day mini-fest called *No Speed Limit* with MUNICIPAL WASTE and DFA headlining. We also set up shows for FROM ASHES RISE, YHTEISKUNAN YSTAVAT?, and the annual *Killed By Brno Vol.2* in December with eight Czech hardcore/punk bands. This year LIFE SENTECE, REGRESS, RUÎDOSA INMUNDICIA, BURIAL, and DEATHTOKEN played, and more gigs are planned: SOCIAL CHAOS, NEUROOTIISET PELIMANIT, DOG SOLDIER, BORN/DEAD, CATHETER and more. We tried to bring the noise from all parts of the world and always book two to three local bands for support. United Crusties recently put out free CD-R compilation called *United Crusties Spending Loud Night Comphellation Vol.1*, with recordings of bands that will soon play here. To contact United Crusties write either to SEE YOU IN HELL or Ultima Ratio label's adress.

Bands:

ZEMEZLUC are Czech punk veterans and have been active since the late 80s. During the last year they released two new EPs and a split EP with LECSA PUNK from Hungary. Also recommended is their *System Kanibal* LP. Contact: www.zemezluc.zde.cz

FESTA DESPERATO underwent huge line-up changes in the middle of 2004 when their singer and bass player quit. With a brand-new line-up they are ready to kill you with their wall of crust/noise! Their guitar parts and solos remind me WORLD BURNS TO DEATH, and they even cover DISCLOSE. Their 2003 demo tape, which includes a REAGAN YOUTH cover, is probably still available. The new line-up just recorded a full tape that will be out on the guitarist's Gas Mask label soon. Contact: www.festadesperato.com

BASTO is a brand new band with Mirek, ex-FESTA DESPERATO, on the mic and the current FESTA's drummer with two very young punx. The result is complete raw punk massacre in the vein of old Finnish bands, played at break neck-speed. They even cover "Melakka" by KAAOS. So far, they have completed a few mini-tours, and a split T-shirt with SEE YOU IN HELL.

SCARTO is another band with Mirek and this time Peter (ex-SPACE TO BEING and Beer Is Not Drink label owner) sitting behind the drum set. Spastic, thrash/grind with some metal parts-brutal shit! They played their debut show with BURIAL and DEATHOKEN in March. You can contact both SCARTO/BASTO at Ultima Ratio label address.

MAC GYVER arose out of the ashes of popular local punk band PAZI SNAJPER, who existed from the mid 90s till '03. This trio plays fast and melodic hardcore punk similar to bands like JUGGLING JUGULARS and LA FRACTION. Full EP recently out in cooperation of Malarie and two other labels. There was some talk about a possible Euro tour with INNOXIA CORPORA this year, but I am not sure it will happen. Contact: vagosh666@post.sk

MORE BAD NEWS has been active since 2002 with a full EP and split EP with SHEEVA YOGA out, and split EP with ISKRA on a UK label in the works. They play metallic hardcore in the vein of CHILDREN OF FALL or CATHARSIS. Contact: www.morebadnews.czechcore.cz

MAD PIGS I have not yet heard, but they seem to be very much into street punk, a la THE CASUALTIES, as they probably have the biggest mohawks in Brno. A split CD with TOM AND THE BOOTBOYS released in Japan on Pogo 77 Records came out recently. Contact: www.madpigs.net

Two more bands coming from Brno I haven't heard yet are: MY DEAD CAT, who were recently resurrected after an almost two year hiatus and continue with their emo and experimental stuff; and NAGAIKA who plays anarchopunk with ex-TERRA RIOT (defunct, acoustic music with strong anarchist lyrics) members, and just played their first show.

SEE YOU IN HELL is the band I play guitar for and is furious crust/thrash with some dangerous stage antics. Last year our first full LP *Umet se prodat* ("Market Your Self") was released on Ultima Ratio, Phobia, and Insane Society Records. And now, there's a CD version with bonus tracks, released in Japan on Too Circle Records. The same CD version will be also released in Brazil (Usina De Sangue Records), Mexico (Cryptas Records), Spain (UHP Records), a tape in Indonesia (Ibuku Diperkosa Recrords.), and a split CD-R with 20 MINUTES OF CHAOS in Belarus (I forgot the label's name sorry!). Also, there was the split EP with MASS GENOCIDE PROCESS, which was released by 18 labels from all parts of the world including Mexico, Japan, Iceland, and the USA. A few compilations are in the works: *Barbaric Thrash Europe* CD on 625, Roma benefit compilation CD on Schaundmaul, and a tribute to NEGATIVE FX (covers), which was supposed to come out on Podruido from LA, but I now believe it will be never released. Right now we are slowly working on a second LP scheduled for the beginning of 2006. SEE YOU IN

HELL has toured the UK and are returning in September with HOMO CONSUMENS: 16/9 Regensburg (ger), 17/9 Luxembourg, 18/9 Southampton or Brighton (uk), 19/9 Birmingham or Stoke on Trent (uk), 20/9 Manchester or Sheffield (uk), 21/9 Leeds (uk), 22/9 Glasgow (uk), 23/9 Edinburgh (uk), 24/9 Boston (uk), 25/9 Bristol (uk), 26/9 London (uk), 27/9 Liege (bel), 28/9 Manheim (ger). There's a plan to tour Japan in 2006. Contact: www.seeyouinhell.cz.

Labels news

Insane Society Records (www.insanesociety.net): HELLSHOCK tape, REMAINS OF THE DAY tape, CONSUME CD, MALIGNANT TUMOUR/LYCANTHROPHY split EP, SEE YOU IN HELL LP, MALIGNANT TUMOUR *Burn In Hell* LP/CD/tape, BLOWN TO BITS tape, MASS GENOCIDE PROCESS/SEE YOU IN HELL split EP out, in the works: KYLESA tape, DREAD 101/V.I.R. split EP, COMA LP/CD, CHARLES BRONSON discography tape. Also a great selection of T-shirts/patches/buttons!

Phobia Records (www.insanesociety.net/phobia): KOMPLEX VINY tape, S.I.K.A./KOBRA XI split EP, SEE YOU IN HELL tape, MASS GENOCIDE PROCESS/SEE YOU IN HELL split EP, HARSH/CONTROL MECHANISM split EP, WOJCZECH EP, DESASTRE tape, HUMAN WASTE tape, BLOWN TO BITS tape, DODSDOM tape. In the works: tapes of TERRIBLE HEADACHE, BESK, WOJCZECH/INSTINCT OF SURVIVAL.

Impregnate Noise Laboratories (www.impregnate.wz.cz): INNOXIA CORPORA *Hell* LP, EASPA MEASA tape, MASS GENOCIDE PROCESS/SEE YOU IN HELL split EP, MASS GENOCIDE PROCESS/VISIONS OF WAR split LP, MASS GENOCIDE PROCESS/ALAMOGORDO split EP, RABIES/DISTURBANCE PROJECT split EP, BALACLAVA/COMPLICITE CANDIDE split EP, P.P.M.H./GREX split tape.

Drugs Kill Your Mind Records (http://dkym.chewing-gum.cz): STAKE OUT tape, TEAR IT UP tape, MORE BAD NEWS/SHEEVA YOGA split EP, KENT BROCKMANN tape, THE FLAME STILL BURNS/JEDNOTA split EP, BALACLAVA/COMPLICITE CANDIDE split EP out, in the works: FROM ASHES RISE/VICTIMS tape, VOETSEK tape, LAHAR/GRIDE split EP, DEADFALL tape etc.

Ultima Ratio (ultima.ratio@seznam.cz): SEE YOU IN HELL LP, VIIMEINNEN KOLONA tape, KONFIDENT tape. In the works: MURDER DISCO X tape, BEYOND DESCRIPTION tape, FESTA DESPERATO/SICK TERROR split EP, AGATHOCLES tape, COMPLICITE CANDIDE/77 split LP etc.

Malarie Records (www.malarie.ind.cz): WOLONGOLONG LP, INNOXIA CORPORA *Hell* LP, MAC GYVER EP, BALACLAVA/COMPLICITE CANDIDE split EP, AD ACTA CD, VYBOR VEREJNEHO BLAHA LP/tape, PSI/TRAGEDIA split tape.

Beer Is Not Drink Records (bindrec@seznam.cz): MERDA *Minha...* CD, QUILL/GEORGE BITCH JR split EP, OPSTAND discography tape, WOJCZECH EP. In the works: DEADFALL tape.

Templetton Records (www.templetton.wz.cz): S.I.K.A./KOBRA XI split EP, MASS GENOCIDE PROCESS/VISIONS OF WAR split LP, MASS GENOCIDE PROCESS/ALAMOGORDO split EP, BALACLAVA/COMPLICITE CANDIDE split EP.

Out Of Control Records (www.outofcontrol.wz.cz): BLOOD I BLEED/UNHOLY GRAVE split EP, FUCK ON THE BEACH/YACOPSAE split EP, SQUARE THE CIRCLE tape. In the works: FUCK ON THE BEACH/GEORGE BITCH JR. split EP, YACOPSAE tape, NO VALUE tape, NESOUCAST STROJE/SICHERHATE SYSTEM split 10."

Day After Records (www.dayafter.cz): ENDSTAND *Burning Bridges* LP/CD, CHILDREN OF FALL *Bonjour Tristesse* LP/CD, CHALLENGER *When Friends...* LP/CD, 1000 TRAVELS OF JAWAHARLAL *Owari...* LP/CD. In the works: THE YELLOW PRESS LP/CD.

Samuel Records (http://www.sweb.cz/samuel.records): IDIOT SAVANT/WHOS MY SAVIOUR split LP, LANDMINE SPRING picture EP, WOJCZECH EP. In the works: LAHAR/IDIOT SAVANT split 10," LAHAR/GRIDE split EP, AUSTIN LUCAS LP etc.

Pohoda Records (www.pohodarecords.com): P.S. picture EP, DEZINFEKCE LP/CD, SVINE/DEZINFEKCE split EP out.

Gas Mask Records (www.insanesociety.net/gasmask): MELEE tape, SEE YOU IN HELL/THE PUBLIC split EP, v/a *Dying Alive/Living Dead* LP, LEBENDEN TOTEN/SKITKIDS split tape. In the works: BLOOD SPIT NIGHTS tape, FESTA DESPERATO tape.

Papagajuv Hlasatel Records (www.phr.cz): ZEMEZLUC *Tak Rekni* EP, ZEMEZLUC/LECSA PUNK split EP, V/A: *Punkova Brigada* CD (compilation of Czechoslovakian 80s bands collected from demos), RED INSECT *Police Bastards* tape, ZEMEZLUC *Strepy* CD.

OK, I think that's all for now. If you are planning to visit our fucked up country during the summer, there are a number of hardcore punk festivals: "Obscene Fest," "Fluff Fest," "Play Fast Or Don't Fest," as well as similar events. Also, many foreign bands are touring the Czech Republic this time of the year, so be sure to check out www.czechcore.cz for up to date information about gigs that will happen. Of course this report is not 100% complete as I've decided to just list stuff that I find most interesting. Without a question there's much more going on. I encourage you to discover more bands from this country on your own!

Sorry for listing websites and emails only. If you need street addresses for the above-mentioned bands/labels, just drop me a line. Thanx for your attention!

Filip Fuchs, Grohova 39, 602 00 Brno, Czech Rep.
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FESTA DESPERATO

HOMO CONSUMENS

NEW ZEALAND

Pöwhiritia i Aotearoa.

Greetings from New Zealand.

Before I delve into the finer details of the thriving punk scene here in New Zealand, I would like to stress one point for some of the less informed, geographically-challenged readers may be unaware of. New Zealand is *not* a province of Australia, nor does it have any subservient political ties with that country. We are our own country, governed by a democratically elected government and while Australia may be the nearest, largest land mass to the three small South Pacific islands that constitute New Zealand, that is where the ties end. Now, with that out of the way–on with the punk rock!

There has always been a voracious appetite for punk rock in this country. This is proved by the fact that such luminaries as THE CLASH, THE RAMONES, and DEAD KENNEDYS all made it out here to play shows in their heyday. In the last year our shores have been visited by acts such as SICK OF IT ALL, GOOD RIDDANCE, LAGWAGON, STRIKE ANYWHERE, TERROR, HOT WATER MUSIC, MADBALL and the MC5.

This country has a long history of producing genuinely exciting bands of high quality. Go back to the late 70s, early 80s and New Zealand was awash with original and influential bands. The bands of this era include Kiwi legends THE SCAVENGERS plus such notables as THE HENCHMEN, SUBURBAN REPTILES, THE ENEMY, PROUD SCUM, ANDROIDSS, NEWMATICS, NO TAG, RIOT 111 and DESPERATE MEASURES just to name a few. Many of these bands can be found on the seminal NZ comp, *AK-79*, which features all Auckland bands. For a broader, nation-wide taste of vintage Kiwi punk, seek out the great 2002 released *Move To Riot* CD on Raw Power Records.

More Kiwi Nation bands have continued the tradition of inflicting exhilarating punk rock on unsuspecting ears: be it the anarchic art of THE AXEMEN; the HC approach of STICKY FILTH and DEAD CENTRE; or the more contemporary sounds of BRUBECK. Yet, right now, punk rock here in New Zealand–both vintage and current–is surfing the crest of a massive wave.

Of the vintage bands doing stuff of note, there were reformation shows in November 2004 by THE SCAVENGERS, the band's first shows since 1978 when they departed for Melbourne, Australia and became THE MARCHING GIRLS. A reissue of the classic SCAVENGERS LP is to be released soon with improved mastering and extra tracks. TOY LOVE, a band that mutated out of Dunedin's THE ENEMY after a move north to Auckland, has a double retrospective CD entitled *Cuts* out now.

Both those bands featured Chris Knox, often cited as *the* granddaddy of NZ Punk. He's still seen every now and then, kicking up a stink with his acoustic guitar. NZ's very own TV SMITH you could say.

Of the current scene, rather than list band after band and label after label, I've decided to present a city-by-city guide, giving a few details on the city itself also. So, starting north and working down, we start with…

AUCKLAND

The country's biggest city, Auckland is a sprawling urban metropolis that houses a third of this country's entire population. It's known as *The City of Sails* as it allegedly has more boats per capita than any other city on the planet. Given the density of population (over 1.3 million), it is not surprising that many bands gravitate toward the city.

The *Big Four* Kiwi bands are all Auckland based. The most prominent and respected name has to be SOMMERSET (www.sommerset.net.nz), a four-piece that has played shows both in Europe and America. The band has just released its third album (fourth if you include a compilation of early recordings) entitled *Say What You Want*. Previous releases have seen light of day on labels such as America's Phyte and the UK's Deck Cheese. To describe the band's sound, it would be melodic HC with big, sing-along choruses, similar to AVAIL

MALENKY ROBOT

EVIL PRIEST

meets final album JAWBREAKER. Unfortunately, I heard today that the band has split up due to line-up problems-a sad day for NZ Punk Rock. THE D4 (www.thed4band.com) is another quartet, but this time the sound is firmly entrenched in garage punk, taking JOHNNY THUNDERS licks and playing them with the breathless conviction of early SAINTS with an injection of adrenalin. The band has just released its second album, *Out Of My Head*, a follow-up to the raucous debut *6Twenty*, and is due to head out on a tour of Japan soon. Taking the chaos of AT THE DRIVE-IN and empowering it with pissed-off acidity, THE MINT CHICKS (www.themintchicks.com) has quickly made a name for itself. After a batch of EPs and shows abroad, the band has released its debut album, *Fuck The Golden Youth* on the Flying Nun label, which is also home of THE D4. One of this country's most vicious-sounding bands is MISSING TEETH, a four-piece that combines the unrelentless balls-to-the-wall, flat out punk of JERRY'S KIDS with the petulance of THE GERMS and the seething anger of LEFTOVER CRACK. The band has released a full album, an EP entitled *The Disaster* and played shows throughout NZ as well as having made a recent trip to Australia supporting GOOD RIDDANCE. Five-piece COLD BY WINTER (www.coldbywinter.co.nz) is another band opening eyes, taking the discordant HC of SHAI HULUD and mixing it with the pulsating rhythms of HOT WATER MUSIC. The band has just released its debut 10-track album, *We: The Living*. DIE! DIE! DIE! is a trio, formed in 2003, and play a visceral, driving brand of punk that emphasises both rhythm and volume whilst retaining a sharp sense of melody. Having released a six-track EP, the band recently left NZ to record its debut album in Chicago with BIG BLACK/SHELLAC mainman Steve Albini. The band has already played in Australia three times, supported WIRE here in NZ and now looks for shows in the US and Europe. The mainstay of the Auckland HC scene is EVIL PRIEST, a dual-vocal five-piece that plays crushing HC in the mold of BAD BRAINS with the density of CRO-MAGS. The album, *Underground Hardcore,* was released in 2002 featuring 12 songs that zip by in 20 minutes. A new slab, *Hardcore Gods II* has just been released. A newish outfit that is already attracting a lot of attention on the Auckland circuit is THE CINIX, a four-piece female fronted outfit playing a straight-up, pissed off brand of HC. No arty wanks, no metal breakdowns, they are simple, fast, hard-hitting songs about living in a city where your chances have all run out and there's nowhere left to go. The band has a six-track EP recorded, but no release date as yet. Another band creating a stir, and doing it completely on its own back, is the six-piece MALENKY ROBOT. Taking a raw post-HC approach and attacking it with the spirit of early CLASH, the band has an original sound that eschews a lot of the usual punk rock trappings. An EP entitled *The Russians Are Coming, Again* is due for release soon. Coming from the same scene as MALENKY ROBOT is noise rockers 1000. Theirs is a sound that takes the dynamics of FUGAZI and WIRE and churns them out with the twisted vision of BUTTHOLE SURFERS. An EP was released late last year. FOAMY ED (www.foamyed.com) is an all-girl, five-piece that always attracts a crowd with its fast, new punk sound mixed with a developing sense of HC. The band has been quiet of late, but two self-released EPs are available and a grant has just been given to the band to record a video for their song *Exhale*. Although formed in 2001 THE RABBLE (www.therabble.net) is still a young but rapidly improving band. Taking inspiration from RANCID and street punk in general, the band has already released three EPs and played with the likes of SICK OF IT ALL and GOOD RIDDANCE. Other notable bands in the Auckland area include WE DUNNO, GRAVEYARD RUMBLE, THE SIKFUX and THE COOLIES. Auckland has a decent ska-punk scene also, for those who are so inclined. THE POISONERS combine the two while THE WBC (with a couple of EPs) and THE MANAGERS (with an album) are more ska-based.

Without a doubt, the main label in Auckland, if not NZ, is 1157 RECORDS (www.elevenfiftyseven.com). This label has been around a few years, originally as a vehicle for owner Dean's old band, BALANCE. Things really took off for the label in 2002 and it has now released discs by MISSING TEETH, THE BLEEDERS, COLD BY WINTER and THIS NIGHT CREEPS. Focusing on the heavier end of the HC spectrum, JAILBAIT RECORDINGS (www.jailbait.co.nz) is responsible for bringing us the EVIL PRIEST releases as well as DSM and PROMISE OF BLOODSHED. Puppykiller Records (www.puppykillerrecords.co.nz) is a label set up by Dave, Dean and Kolya from MISSING TEETH. So far, the label's most notable releases have been the fantastic *Pick Of The Litter* compilations that weigh in with 30 tracks each. The third volume should be out soon with several more releases planned. The Puppykiller HQ also doubles as a recording studio, having recorded the likes of MISSING TEETH, ARMY OF DARKNESS, RITALIN and much of the *Pick Of The Litter* comps. The studio has new, improved premises featuring two acoustically treated rooms. Sporadically releasing CDs and seven-inches, RAW POWER RECORDS highlights Kiwi Nation punk rock of the past. Recent releases have given new prominence to the likes of THE HENCHMEN, SHOES THIS HIGH, a great SCAVENGERS 7" and SUBURBAN REPTILES.

With a scene as lively as Auckland's, venues come and go as fre-

quently as bands. The pivotal venue in the city, however, is King's Arms Tavern. This is the venue the international bands tend to play, as well as many NZ bands. Other venues have included Papa Jack's Voodoo Lounge, Galatos, Ponsonby Road Bar, Edens Bar and 193a Symonds Street is an all-ages venue. The guys in MALENKY ROBOT have transformed the basement of their flat at 519 New North Road, Kingsland into The Basement Break. Focussing very much on the post HC/art-Punk scene, the basement has already played host to notable Auckland bands like DIE! DIE! DIE! and THE MINT CHICKS.

Auckland has a couple of festivals of note. "The Big Day Out" is a major bash and has been running for a number of years. This year's line-up included international acts THE HIVES, BEASTIE BOYS and RISE AGAINST as well as local bands THE BLEEDERS and THE D4. Of a more Punk basis is "The Underground Fest," organised by Underground Promotions. Around 20-25 bands play over the course of 4 shows lasting a weekend. The 2004 fest was the first so far, but due to its success, plans are afoot for another in 2005 with the probability of an international band headlining at least one night.

Since the demise of the fantastic Crawlspace, Auckland has lacked a genuinely independent and efficient punk-based record shop. It does have Real Groovy, a large NZ independent with branches in Wellington and Christchurch. Another place selling a few CDs is The Misfit Theatre in Grey Lynn. Besides CDs, it also sells a lot of zines and has a zine resource/library where you can pass a few hours reading from a large back catalogue of NZ and international zines.

Hardcore punk on the radio is catered for via the *Viva La Hardcore* show on 95bFM, which is hosted by Cash from EVIL PRIEST.

For further information on the Auckland scene contact Dean of 1157 (info@elevenfiftyseven.com), Simon Kay (rawpower@paradise.net.nz) or David of MISSING TEETH/Puppykiller (missing.teeth@xtra.co.nz).

HAMILTON

Situated on the banks of the mighty Waikato River, Hamilton is the country's largest inland city. With a population of over 133,000, it also has one of the most active scenes in the country, always hosting touring bands from overseas.

Of the bands, the main name is THIS NIGHT CREEPS (www.tbtmusic.com/thisnightcreeps/), a four-piece that plays twisted, abrasive and emotional HC similar to early HOT WATER MUSIC, but taking it further into the realms of extreme dynamics. The band's debut album, *The Noise of Music*, has just been released on Auckland's 1157 Records, which has already released a self-titled CDEP of the band. A new name on the HC scene is THE BLACK HEART ENDEAVOUR. Having only played a few shows to date, there is hope that the band could make Hamilton the home of HC that isn't just straight-up *old skool*. Let's hope that doesn't mean shitty metal masquerading as hardcore. Doing a chaotic math-rock/HC thing a la THE LOCUST is BATSTORM MURDERS (www.tbtmusic.com/thebatstorm), a dual-vocal six-piece. The band is rumoured to have undergone several line-up changes of late, with various members embroiled in a new project, tentatively titled THE ANTAGONIST. For fans of straight edge HC, the band to check out is WARPATH, which is akin to an angrier MADBALL. If it's garage punk with a non-stop party attitude you want, then check out THE ELECTRIC SHAKEDOWN. Formed just a few years ago, this quartet has already taken its non-stop garage rock mayhem all over the country. FROGLETTER do the rock 'n' roll thing a la THE RAMONES, but with a jazz/swing twist. Another new name, and one of the most exciting, on the Hamilton scene is THE BLUDGERS, a decidedly street-punk deal mixing the anger of AGNOSTIC FRONT and the attitude of early 80s UK punk. The band features half of old Hamilton band MISTAKEN IDENTITY (the other half moved to Auckland and formed THE CINIX) and is due to release a demo soon.

The main venue in Hamilton was Youthzone, an all-ages venue that held approximately 100, but unfortunately this closed recently. The Meteor is a larger venue that frequently plays host to the touring international bands. Ward Lane is a pub in the town center, which is becoming increasingly popular. Of a strictly DIY nature is 5 Cross Roads, a garage venue that has played host to THE BLUDGERS, FROGLETTER and more.

The "Hamtown Smackdown" is a yearly festival, usually lasting two nights in March each year.

For more info on what's hot in Hamilton, contact Luc (shoulder2cry_on@counsellor.com) of THIS NIGHT CREEPS or Mike from THE BLUDGERS (mjbelay@hotmail.com).

NEW PLYMOUTH

Situated on the West Coast of the North Island, New Plymouth is the principal city of the Taranaki region with a population of about 60,000. Once famed for its hardcore punk and dark rock bands, its Mushroom Balls (held during the magic mushroom season, of course!) and nihilistic skinheads, things have become pretty quiet… but not dead.

Leading the small but

dedicated pack of bands is horror-Punks HORROR STORY (www.horrorstory.cjb.net). The band formed in 2000 and is essentially as close to the MISFITS as any band is likely to get, employing full-face make-up, buzzsaw guitars and Danzig-esque vocals. The band has released two discs so far, the album *Graverobbers From Outer Space* and the EP *Rock 'n' Roll Frankenstein* (which includes eight bonus tracks from an early demo). A new album, *Bride Of The Monster* is to be released at Halloween 2005. The band has also been screened several times on NZ TV and is planning a DVD release. In a bit of a coup for NZ bands, HORROR STORY has also snagged distribution in Europe via Fiendforce Records and in America, Canada and Mexico via Crypt Of Blood Records. "The World's most vile band," is also NZ based and entitled GOATFUCKING NUNRAPERS (www.goatfuckingnunrapers.cjb.net). After a long hiatus, the band recently resurfaced for some shows and, while lacking the GG ALLIN exploits of old, rumor has it the band's shows are still essential to witness. NEKROTIKA (www.nekrotika.cjb.net) is an evil-deathcore act and have an album out soon, as do hardcore rap punks EVIL DEAD CREW. Having been around since 1997, CYNICAL PLOY (www.geocities.com/cynicalploy) plays a brand of high-energy punk rock 'n' roll and has recently recorded a new EP to follow-up their debut 7" *Enjoy*. Pop-punk is provided by four-piece RIVAL STATE (www.rivalstate.net), which recently won a contest for a video release. Rumor has it that legendary 80s N.P. band STICKY FILTH is about to play some shows also.

Nigel Toxic of HORROR STORY is the guy behind the city's main record label, Demon Nation. The label has been going for ten years and has released all of the HORROR STORY releases plus both GOATFUCKING NUNRAPERS albums on one disc and all those other releases just mentioned. There are also plans for a release of a third compilation disc of North Island bands and an album from old Hamilton band MISTAKEN IDENTITY. The label has an off-shot, COFFIN CLUB, the aim of which is to release and distribute other bands in the *World Horror Network* and Horror Punk scenes.

Unfortunately, the town can boast of no punk venue and many bands have to venture to Wellington or Palmerston North for shows. There are, however, a few HC shows on the local student radio station, *The Most FM*.

For punk purchases, there are a couple of notable shops in the city. For new releases, check out Raw Music, while for bargain second-hand discs and vinyl there is Missing Link.

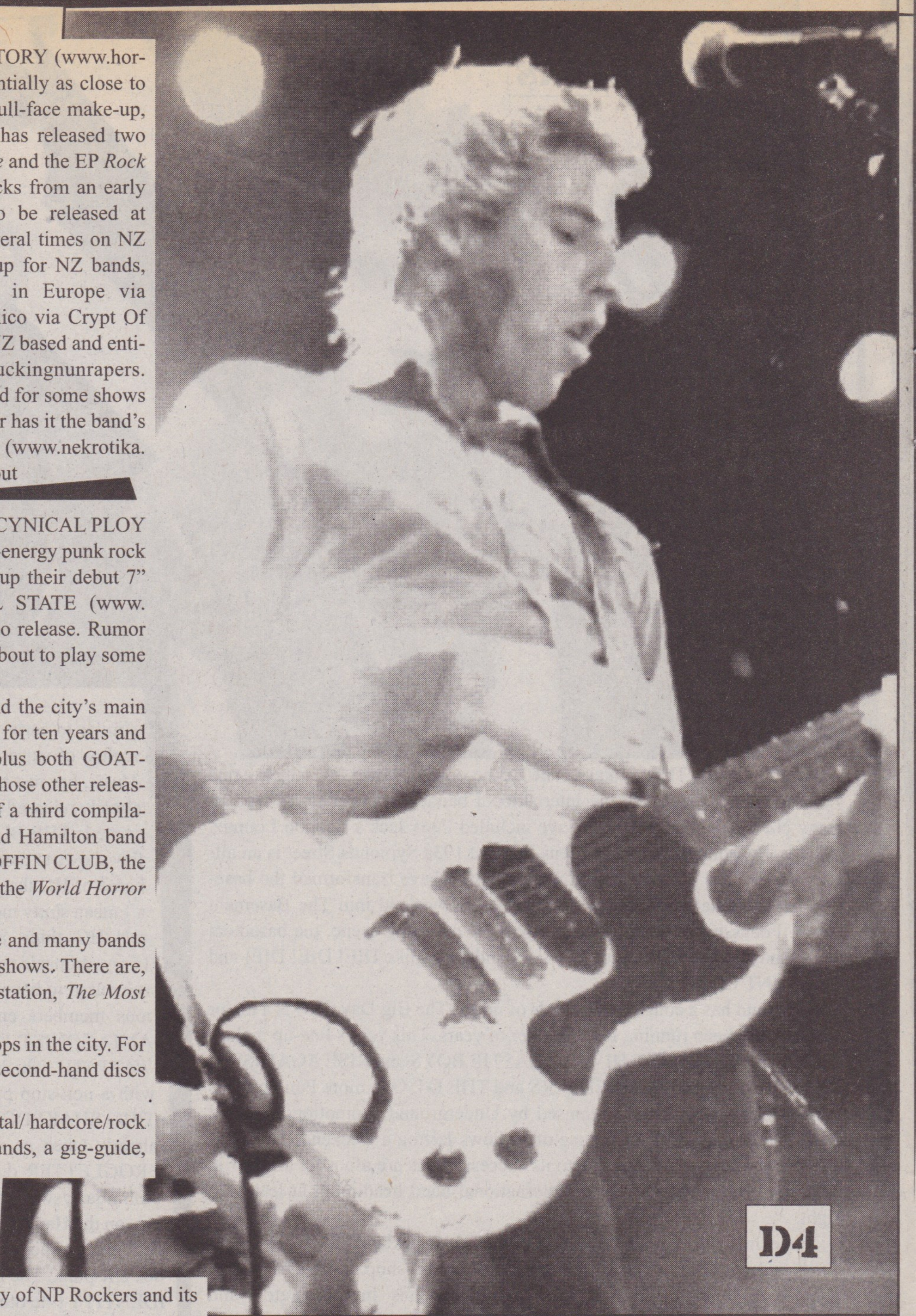
Lastly, the city has a website devoted to the punk/metal/ hardcore/rock 'n' roll scenes. It has profiles on some of the city's bands, a gig-guide, mp3 links and all the things for an online community of NP Rockers and its fans. Check it out.
(www.nprocknroll.cjb.net.)

To get more on the New Plymouth scene, contact Craig of Demon Nation (demonnation@nprocknroll.cjb.net)

HAWKES BAY

Moving to the east coast, this area is often missed by visitors, yet, Napier is one of the best cities of NZ. Napier was gutted by a massive earthquake in 1931 and has transformed itself into one of the best art-deco cities in the Southern Hemisphere, basking in a Mediterranean climate. The scene here is small, but fiercely independent, varied and original.

The most active band is the five-piece TEMPO 38 (www.tempo38.tk). The band has released three EPs, with the latest, *Con*, featuring three tracks of driving, passionate punk-laced rock bringing to mind a sound that would fit neatly next to some of Revelation Recs finer bands such as SHADES APART and IGNITE. The band has also been featured on a number of internationally released comps and looks set to release its debut album late 2005. Other notable bands include BIG BLUE BLANKET. Although currently on hiatus, BBB has been around since 1996 and has released an album and several EPs. The band's sound is an eclectic mix of ska, funk and abrasive punk



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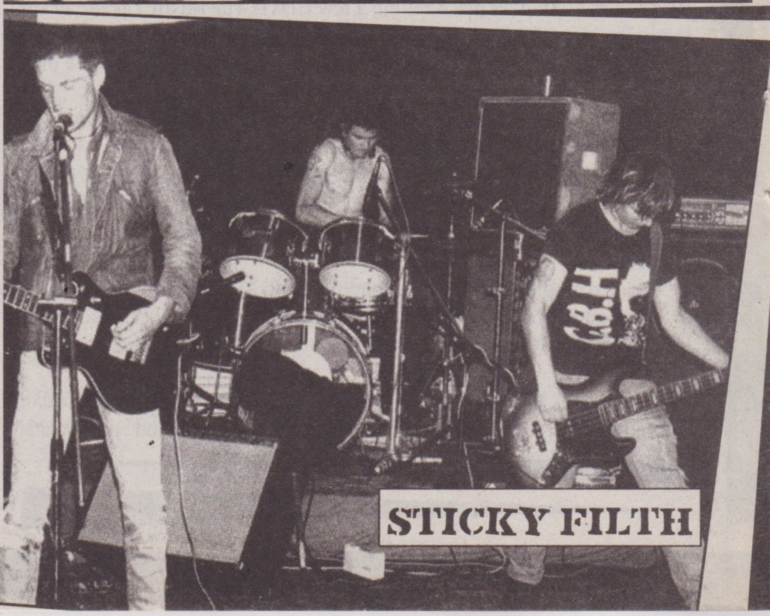


STICKY FILTH

that brings to mind a *skanked* version of CRIMPSHRINE. ANGEL HAMMER fly the flag for stomping, growled HC-laced metal and has released a couple of EPs: *Tricks* and, most recently, *Tunnels*. SERVO features Alec Withers from TEMPO 38. It's a drum machine/synth-based hip-hop deal delivered with punk vocals. The debut album, *Ron Giorgi Park*, is available.

All of these acts and more from the Hawkes Bay area have their sounds released via Hit Your Head Music (www.hityourheadmusic.tk), a local label founded in 1996 with the debut BIG BLUE BLANKET release.

The main venue in the area is Napier's O'Flaherty's. It's not strictly a punk rock venue, but it is the place that hosts the main shows and touring acts with a capacity of approx. 200. As far as record shops go, it's a similar tale. Electric City Music in Napier is an independent, but not one solely devoted to punk rock.

To contact anyone in the area, email Alec on (info@hityourheadmusic.tk)

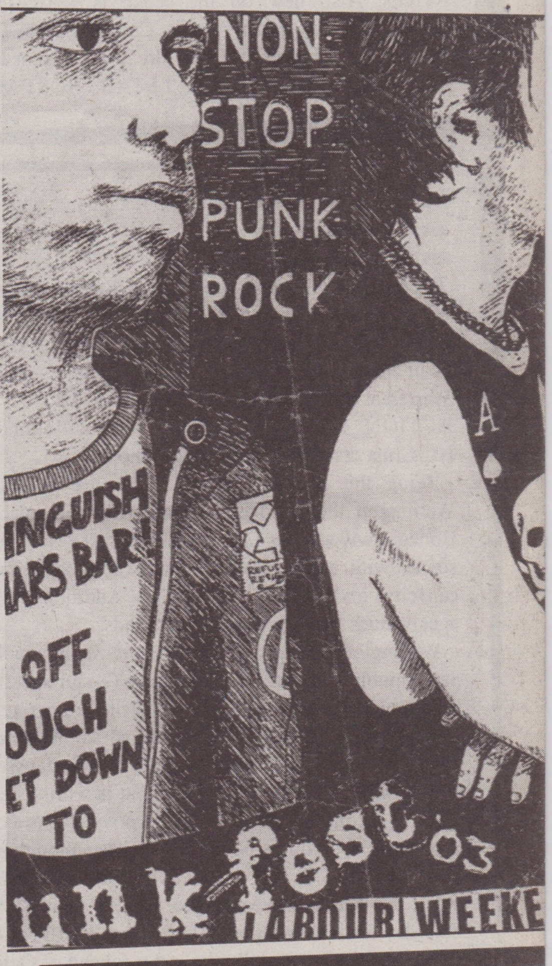
PALMERSTON NORTH

This is a young, vibrant city with a population bordering 68,000. Massey University is the second largest university in NZ, which results in a constantly fluctuating population, over half of which is believed to be under 25. It's not a city that is considered to be a popular tourist destination, but it is one with an active punk scene that regularly attracts between 120-200 people per show.

Being a city with a high student population, bands come and go yearly, but of those that stick around, the band making the most noise right now is STITCHFACE (www.stitchface.tk). The band has quickly established itself to be the country's leading ska-punk band and has just released its debut EP *Night of The Living Thread*. The five-piece has played several festivals, toured NZ with a range of bands and has had a show broadcast live on Control Radio. BLACK CHROME is a trio with a caustic, embittered sound drawing parallels with the fury of early SNUFF but played with the snotty disgust of a prime garage band (think NEW BOMB TURKS or PAGANS). There is a self-titled live album available. The four-piece SCOURGE OF TUSSIN is the city's leading balls-out rock band taking DWARVES intoxication and applying a driving SUPERSUCKERS beat. They too have a live album, *Live Scourge*, available. On the hardcore front is COLLAPSE, which has started to garner a good bit of support with a brand of emo-infused HC. For those who like their HC metal-tinged, there is the four-piece 7.62 SHORT that has released the EP *AK-47 Heavy Metal* and a young band, CATHEDRA, whom many are touting to be the *great white hope* of Palmy. The band's debut EP *The Auburn Autumn* sold out within days and a new EP is imminent.

$Lave Recordings (www.slave.co.nz) is a non-profit record label collective that currently features 13 bands, including SCOURGE OF TUSSIN, BLACK CHROME, 7.62 SHORT and new signings CATHEDRA and is heavily involved with the organization/promotion of both artists and shows. It has just released an 18-track 2005 label sampler. The other label releasing punk in the city is STAKEOUT RECORDS. The label has released a number of discs, including the STITCHFACE disc and is also actively involved in show booking and promotion.

Creative Sounds (AKA The Stomach, www.creativesounds.org.nz) is a city council-funded studio/venue/practice space dedicated to all-ages and is hugely supportive to the young bands. Bands can record for $15/hour with decent equipment and shows can be put on with ease. Craig Black, the main man behind Creative Sounds also fronts COLLAPSE. Guv'nors Tavern is the dominant R18 venue and the main stop for touring bands wanting to keep costs down. A central city flat was converted into a gig space in 1999 by the now defunct local band MAILBOX SKIPOLE. The last tenants named the place Enemy Dojo and hosted bands, but unfortunately the space is now closed.



The town is also home to what is considered to be the online bible of all that occurs in Palmy's and NZ's Punk scenes, PUNKAS (www.punkas.com). You will find updates on all of NZ's bands, venues and labels as well as reviews, forums, news, links and much more. It should be noted that a lot of information for this scene report was accessed via the pages of this website.

With regard to record shops, check out Mango Music. This is an independent store that is very supportive to local bands and frequently has in-store shows, often of the punk/HC persuasion.

Radio is catered for via *Radio Control* (www.radiocontrol.org.nz), a local student station that has the *Stagedive* punk show on every Wednesday.

For more info on Punk in Palmerston North contact Matt (punkas@gmail.com) or the gang at $lave (news@slave.co.nz)

WELLINGTON

Wellington is the country's capital city, lying at the very base of the North Island. While often over-looked in favour of Auckland, Wellington has a busy and pulsating punk rock scene, which mirrors life in the city. With a population of just 206,000, it can often seem faster and busier than Auckland and has its own magnificent harbour.

THE DEADLINE has rapidly become the main band in Wellington, certainly within HC circles. Singer Tali is heavily involved in unions and the band performs with most of the international

touring acts as well as having toured NZ. The band has made its debut recordings with the prospect of a release soon. Unfortunately, the band is thinking about splitting up. There is a thriving crust scene in Wellington. Pick of the bunch probably has to be the newly formed SPARKLE MOTION, which has an EP out soon with Auckland's THE BANG IT UPS. HUNG JURY has been about a few years now. The band play hard, fast punk rock and state their aim as "trying to go as mental as possible both onstage and off." The band has released an EP entitled *The Spasms And The Falafel Kebab*. Former IF I HAD A GUN vocalist, the infamous Blair Jones, has a new band doing the rounds, terrifying the neighbours. The concisely titled ASA brands itself as thrash-core and, if Blair's reputation is anything to go by, ASA could be just about the most exciting new band in town. The band has yet to release anything, but shows are already lined up with Australia's PURE EVIL. THE CARNYS (www.thecarnys.tk) is an anarcho, feminist folky-punk four-piece that has been around since 1999. A self-titled album has been released and the band has the honor of being NZ's only Punk band with a violin player, which also makes for one of the most original sounds in the country. A new batch of bands has appeared in the Capital City of late, including hard working pop-punkers NOT QUITE RIGHT, emo merchants SIDECAR FURY and THE WAR WITHIN, which feature former members of Christchurch's RSI. Older bands treading the boards include the politicised 77-style punk of DEAD VICIOUS, GMC, DIY and FLESH D-VICE, a band that has been playing since the 80s. The eight-piece ska-punk veterans THE OFFBEATS (www.theoff-beats.co.nz) play only sporadically but has released a wealth of recorded matter and the live show remains one of the best in Wellington. The most exciting new band in the city could be SO SO MODERN, featuring Mark Leon, former frontman with HC band VULTURE, who formed from the ashes of legendary HC band TRIED FOR TREASON, and Grayson Gilmour, formerly of Palmerston North HC band RECREATION. Also new on the scene is KARAOKE starring former KILLDEER singer and guitarist Cam and Rich. The band plays a well-structured, technical HC with dreamy instrumental intervals reminiscent of bands like ISIS. GUEST STABS HOST with frontman Rhydian Thomas (said to be starting another band with a former member of EVIL PRIEST), play straight-up HC with fun yet brutal breakdowns and all round good times.

The city's main record label is Nay Records (www.nayrecords.tk), run once again by that man Blair Jones. The label released THE CARNYS' album and is due to release a disc of live PADDED CELL (another Blair Jones band, this being *old-skool* punk meets ska) recordings soon. Warren at Bar Bodega is the man behind MONSTER RECORDS while ACTION MAN RECORDS (www.actionmanrecords.com) is a HC/Crust distro run by Rhydian Thomas.

Being the nation's capital, there are several decent venues in Wellington that hold punk shows fairly regularly: the 500 capacity Bodega (www.bodega.co.nz), Indigo has a full 3.8kw PA and mics and stands with a 400 capacity (www.indigobar.co.nz), The Cross (200 capacity) and Valve (150 capacity). Additionally there are several all-ages venues that are hired out to bands.

Wellington is home to The Freedom Shop, which specialises in alternative publications and paraphernalia (T-shirts, etc). Although not strictly a punk store it is well worth a visit for anyone into the scene. Also worth visiting is Slowboat Records, which has an excellent selection of new and second-hand vinyl as well as an extensive New Zealand section. Rainbow Records in Lower Hutt is worth checking out for a large range of second-hand vinyl. Real Groovy stocks a comprehensive range of punk CDs, clothing, books and DVDs although prices are on the high side.

For the last seven years or so, the city has also hosted "Punkfest," a three-day festival that generally features 13-16 NZ bands held on Labor Weekend, which is usually the last weekend of October.

ASA's Blair Jones and Rhydian Thomas host the *Punk-Guidance Recommended Show* every Sunday on Massey University's MUNT 88.5 FM Radio. This is a 2-hour show, half of which is the *MRR* radio broadcast.

To get further information on Wellington contact Myles Fear (myles.fear@xtra.co.nz), Blair Jones (blairjones76@hotmail.com) or Tali (fouramcollective@yahoo.co.nz). These people are also the main people to contact about putting on a show in the city.

NELSON

Moving to the South Island, Nelson is the first city of any real size with a population of over 53,000. It's said to be blessed with the best climate in the country. Unfortunately, it is more about electronic beats than punk rock these days, but a small scene still exists.

JOHNNY CHRIST is a trio that lays down some seriously dirty 70s style, old skool rock 'n' roll and has just released a new album. The band features members of older Nelson band DEAD CENTRE. HARRY MUD, formerly of Oi! five-piece HEADSWILLROLL has taken up the gauntlet of a solo punk rock career. And, if the rumor mill is correct, Shaza Slapper (formerly of pseudo-Punkettes THE HAPPY SLAPPERS) and Jesus Chris from JOHNNY CHRIST are forming a new band with Aidspak from SCHOOL OF MEAT. Other bands to look out for are FATAL DISCOLLAPSE and SUMMER OFFENSIVE.

Smalltime Records (www.smalltime.co.nz) release compilations featuring some Kiwi ska and punk bands. The label's recently released *Punkemon Vol. II* compilation features 22 bands including SOMMERSET, MISSING TEETH, RITALIN, THIS NIGHT CREEPS and NOT QUITE RIGHT.

The Phat Club remains the only real live venue mixing up visits from national and international live acts, although the Yaza Café has played host to Dunedin's RITALIN on the band's recent tour. *Access Radio Fresh FM* has a number of specialist shows featuring live NZ sounds. As for record shops, again, not a specific Punk Rock shop, but the independent Everyman Records stocks a good range of releases.

CHRISTCHURCH

This is the country's second largest city and one that is very English in its make-up. Although it houses many gothic buildings and wooden villas, it is still a very modern city. The punk scene here is sparse though; so much so that no one involved in it was willing to offer any localised information on the city's punk rock activity.

Of the bands, the main name is probably SIXLIP (www.sixlip.com), a four-piece that has been together a few years playing a self-confessed brand of straight-up hardcore with "intense off-beats and well-deserved breakdowns." The band has a five-track EP out entitled *Truth Be Told*. ILL-RECEIVED began life as a trio in 2001 and has now swelled to a five-piece. The band has released an EP *303* and just recently the follow-up album *40 Minute Unloading Zone*. Four ladies with a distinct passion for gritty rock 'n' roll came together to form AViATOUR (www.aviatourband.com). The band has recently been in the studio to record a demo. GETAFIX (www.getafix.co.nz) blend HC and Punk with Hip-Hop and Funk. The band has a 9-track album, *Welcome To What*, due for release soon.

Chucky from SIXLIP is the man behind BROKEN HILL RECORDS (www.brokenhillrecords.com), the label responsible for releasing the records listed above. It also offers help with live sound, recording and mastering.

The main venue for most Punk bands is Dux De Lux, which has a capacity of about 100 and an in-house PA. The Jet Set Lounge is geared more toward touring bands, with a capacity of 300-400, an in-house lighting rig but not an in-house PA. The Wunderbar can pack in about 250, but the in-house PA is not the best. There is a new all-ages venue apparently–unfortunately I can tell you no more than that.

For more info, try contacting Chucky (info@brokenhillrecords.com)

DUNEDIN

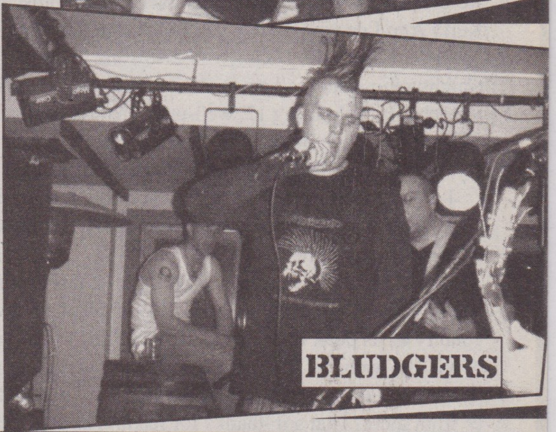
Moving further south still we come to Dunedin, a fantastic city of Victorian architecture, home to the country's oldest university and also the infamous Speight's Brewery-an essentially Kiwi ale! Given the pop-

ulation is smaller than Hamilton's, there is a host of great bands and art in general originating from the city.

THE PUKES (www.geocities.com/mikepukenz) is probably the city's most notorious band. Combining twisted humour with pertinent politics, the band kicks out a furious, stripped-down sound that has an emphasis on energy and attitude, finding the perfect middle ground between SUBHUMANS (UK) cynicism and early GBH attack. The band has released a video CD entitled *Oh Shit! It's... The Pukes Video CD* featuring 12 tracks of rough and ready, raw punk rock. Front man, Mike Puke, was formerly of Nelson band DEAD CENTRE and is also responsible for the solo project PUKE. In this guise, he has released three albums with the latest, *The Nightmayor Of Nelson*, being a form of concept album based around various mayors of Nelson. RITALIN (www.ritalinkids.co.nz) could easily lay claim to being the country's hardest working band, having just completed a tour supporting STRIKE ANYWHERE–which was the second NZ tour RITALIN has completed in two months–and, at the time of writing, is touring the South Island with Auckland's MISSING TEETH. With a fast and tight sound that brings to mind a Fat Wreck influence but with a greater HC intensity and attitude, the band released the nine-track *Stop Wasting Time* EP in 2003. 2005 looks to be an active year for the band with a planned album release and a tour of Australia on the cards. The band's most recent release was an eight-track split CDEP with fellow Dunedinites TWO FAT LADIES. This band's sound is raucous and thrashy, similar to early LEATHERFACE–complete with Stubbs-esque growled vocals. Often referred to as the, "dirty old men of the Dunedin scene" is BLISTERING TONGUES. This four-piece has experienced many line-up changes, the most recent being the addition of RITALIN's guitarist Vanya on drums. The band–which could be described as NZ's answer to a faster, gnarlier PETER AND THE TEST-TUBE BABIES–has just released a 13-track live CD entitled *You'll Get What You're Given* that acts as the follow-up to the 2001 album *Give Jesus A Semi*. A tour of Australia is also planned. CORPORATE TRASH is a new name that is set to have its debut three-track EP released soon. Mixing up embittered CHOKING VICTIM ska with loose, uncompromising snotty punk, the band has been together about a year and is made up of high school pupils. SKA FACE CLAW features a couple of RITALIN members and, as the name suggests, kick up a splendid OP IVY meets THE SPECIALS noise. The band's debut EP is out now. MOTHRA has been around a few years playing a brand of HC punk with a definite UK bent: think BLITZ meets CARPETTES. THE DDTs fly the punk rock 'n' roll flag with a dirty RAMONES sound and hope to record soon; as does DIOXIN, a HC Crust band in the AUS ROTTEN mould. Other notable Dunedin bands include: APOCOLIPSTICK an all-female band that has been considered a modern CRASS; skate-punx UNCUT BLANKS has a radio session recorded but no official material; psychobilly supergroup THE CREEPS feature members of UNCUT BLANKS, APOCOLIPSTICK and DIOXIN; THE PROVOCATEURS is a bunch of self-confessed, "wild, stroppy women and wannabe punk rock stars", with polystyrene instruments, who perform a fucked-up karaoke mixed with weird performance art; FOUR FLOORS OF WHORES; THE RETURNS; and INFINITE JUSTICE.

Unsurprisingly, the main bands in the city are also the prime motivators behind the city's record labels. Rebel High Records (www.rebelhigh.org) is the creation of the guys from RITALIN and is named after a squat the band stayed at with members of TWO FAT LADIES. Releases so far include RITALIN, BLISTERING TONGUES, TWO FAT LADIES, SKA FACE CLAW and the impending CORPORATE TRASH EP. There is also the *Rebel High Comp* featuring 21-tracks of NZ's finest bands. Vol. II of *Rebel High* is in the planning stages with a possible world-wide outlook. Mothertrucker Records is home to THE PUKES and PUKE as well as having released three albums from DRUGS VS GRANDCHILDREN, a free-noise outfit featuring Kez

CHRIS KNOX



BLUDGERS

1000

from THE PUKES.

Venues are plentiful. The largest venue to stage punk shows is the University venue, Refuel, which has a capacity of 350. This plays host to NZ Punk bands as well as touring international acts. The Crown Hotel hosts mainly local bands and is considered to be a cool *scrungy bar*. The Arc Café, while being essentially a vegan café and coffee shop, hosts shows–albeit arty/alternative deals. It hosts punk shows too and has a back room capacity of about 70, although there is room for another 150 or so in the café area itself. A welcome return to the venue list is The Empire Tavern. This was a popular venue in the 80s and has recently been taken over with the prospect of holding shows. All ages shows are catered for at the Dunedin Musicians Club. This also has bar facilities, a capacity of 200 and it hosted RITALIN's record release party and Australia's PURE EVIL. Most of the punk shows are organized by the guys in RITALIN, Mike Puke or BLISTERING TONGUES.

The Anarchist bookshop, Black Star Books, located near both the Crown and The Arc, sells a variety of Punk-related paraphernalia and hosts the odd in-store performance from the likes of THE PUKES, IF I HAD A GUN and SPARKLE MOTION. If it's records you want, seek out Records Records, a second-hand store in the city's Octagon center that has been in business for over 25 years. It's a strong supporter of local music with many classic punk records on its shelves among other genres.

The city also has a small, independent Punk Radio station called *Inferno Fm*. Kez from THE PUKES does a regular Wednesday slot.

For more info on Dunedin contact Mike Puke (mikepukenz@yahoo.com.au) or Niam from RITALIN (punkmusic_for_cheap@hotmail.com).

You'll note there is a distinct lack of zines listed. The sporadic *Mysterex* (named after a SCAVENGERS song) is a zine that looks back on vintage Kiwi Nation punk rock, but has only done about three issues in something like seven years! *Help, My Snowman's Burning* is a personal, intelligent and insightful zine that has been running since 1997 and is obtainable from PO Box 14562, Kilbirnie, Wellington (hmsb@bigfoot.com). This is put together by Kerry Ann Lee who used to run Red Letter Zine Distro. Another Wellington zine is the witty *Pinktricity*, edited by Kim who also runs a form of zine distro. She can be contacted via (mightypkim@hotmail.com). A new zine outta Christchurch is *Sixtyfour*. It's a freebie with the debut issue housing 12, well-presented A5 pages. Contact Chucky in Chch for info. Many of these zines can be ordered via an on-line zine distro (www.moonrocket.co.nz) that stocks a variety of DIY literary, art and music zines as well as comics.

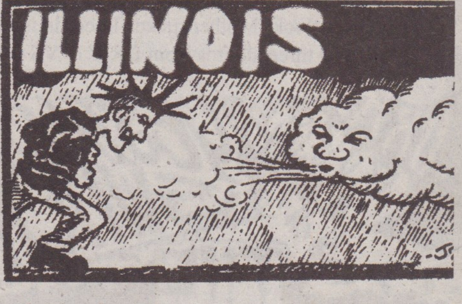
I do an online zine, a continuation of the UK print zine *Scanner.* (www.scannerzine.com) This features international and Kiwi punk/HC along with columns, reviews, interviews, polls, chatrooms and more.

As I stated at the beginning of this piece, this is but an introduction to all that goes on these small, sparsely populated islands. If I can be of any further assistance with information on the country or its punk rock scene, then feel free to drop me a line (stevescannernz@yahoo.com) or via the website. If postal communication is your only access, then write me at: Steve Scanner, 10 Hall Crescent, Taumarunui, New Zealand. I can forward you all relevant addresses from there. That's it–thanks for reading and take care.

Haere ra–ka kite ano…Later, Steve Scanner

THE CARNYS

CARBONDALE, ILLINOIS



I'd like to apologize for slacking in throwing together a scene report lately, but I've been busy with bullshit. So the most you're going to get out of me is a half-assed "sorry," and my best attempt to cover what's been going on here in Carbondale for the past few months.

The COPYRIGHTS are heading out with RIVETHEAD for a month (or so) long tour this May/June. I'm not sure exactly where they're heading on it, besides Canada, so check out the Recess Records website or the Insubordination Records website. Maybe they'll know. And if you're lucky, you'll catch some of the shows where Brett Copyright will be playing with RIVETHEAD. THE HATEFUL DEAD is trying to throw together a two-week long tour as well. No word as to when this summer, though. THE HELL is heading out for a couple of weeks with St Louis' CORBETA CORBATA. PANIC DISORDER is also trying to do a tour at some point this summer. Unfortunately, our van broke down last time we left the state. Fortunately, the Milwaukee punks took us in for the weekend. Thanks to you kids for that. But anyways,it isn't clear whether or not the tour is going to happen. And not to be slowed down by the fact that he isn't in a regularly functioning band, Brino Vagino (of Lost Cross/Vehicle House/Red Bandana fame) is going to be on the road grunting for TULSA this summer. He'll be spreading the gospel of Lost Cross coast to coast, one showerless day at a time.

I've started up a small record label out of Lost Cross called Dry Rot Records. Were putting out 7"s mostly, and possibly a few CDs. The IT BURNS *Cut The Red Wire* 7" is our first release.

That's out right now. Were also putting out a PANIC DISORDER 7" in June/July, a HATEFUL DEAD 7" sometime soon, and an ACCELERATORS/JOSH PLEMON & THE LONESOME FOUR split 7". But then again, knowing me and my friends, we'll see how all this shit works out.

Time for the requisite Reunion/Breakup/New Band info. The WAX-DOLLS got back together for another one off show. I'm not sure how it went, 'cause I wasn't there this time. The HANGAROUNDS are going to be getting back together to finish their album and play a show or two. Nick and Kevin have been pretty busy lately with THE COPYRIGHTS and THE ACCELERATORS, respectively. Indie Punks VIVA VENDETTA has broken up. They're sitting on an unreleased album right now. Who knows what's going to happen with that recording. In what has to be the fucking strangest thing ever, THE NEAR DEATH EXPERIENCE changed their name, stopped playing brutal hardcore, and started playing Hank Williams Sr. styled country music. Now named JOSH PLEMON AND THE LONESOME FOUR, they've been playing out at house shows, gay bars, and frat bars. No joke. The best part is that they're still playing some of their old songs, but with a touch more twang. STATES is a new band playing some dance-y indie punk. That band features ex-members of VIVA VENDETTA, BORO CITY ROLLERS, and current members of THE HATEFUL Dead and THE LONESOME FOUR. TRUCKERS BLOOD is no longer a band, mostly because their bassist Ashton upped and moved to LA with his brother. I guess that also means that CASH GAL/MAYDAY is no longer a band either. The PBR STREET GANG is a new straight ahead punk band. They've got current members of THE HATEFUL DEAD, THE BOURBON KNIGHTS, and THE COPYRIGHTS. THE HELL, who play kickass punk-rock 'n' roll, has been around for a little while now, but have just really started playing around Carbondale.

House Shows seem to be getting more popular around town these days. There have been a few new spots that have had bands play. Hopefully the trend continues through the summer. We've kind of lost the best bar venue in town, Booby's, so the more summer house shows, the better. Hopefully the owner of Booby's will get a little saner and stop trying to make that place a wine bar. As for good shows that have happened recently: Lost Cross had TOYS THAT KILL, THE MODERN MACHINES, THE CHINESE TELEPHONES, THE PHENOMS, SAYONARA, HYPER VIPER, THE DUTCHMEN, and THE RUM RUNNERS play. The Vehicle House had SAYONARA, CHRISTPUNCHER, THE SASS DRAGONS, THE ATARI STAR, THE MODERN MACHINES, and THE MERKURS all come through. It's really great to see The Vehicle House doing semi-regular shows again. Now if only some of the kids that lived there would stop being overly dramatic and let just one show go by without it being on the brink of destruction, life in this town would be so much fucking better. And surprising everyone in the world, THE QUEERS and THE GROOVIE GHOULIES played at The Hangar 9. Not surprising anyone in the world, THE METHADONES also played the Hangar with THE DIALS and BANG! BANG!. And surprising a few people around the world, THE POPSTERS, from Italy, also played.

As for upcoming shows, just go to the Lost Cross website (www.geocities.com/bollman1) and check out the ever altering local shows list. Or be all nerdish about it (like me) and check the Lost Cross Myspace page. And as long your wasting away on the Internet, go check out www.msigarmy.com. It's run by former Lost Cross resident Mikey Snot. The site has some great pictures of the Carbondale scene in the late 80s, and some good pictures of other non-local shows from that time.

So that's about it the land of tanner and lost cross. Just always remember to drain the grape, and not spill the chill. Later, Ray Suburbia.

IT BURNS

THE HELL

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MRR: So what's it like being a Christian hardcore band in a town that has a pretty big backlash against that sort of thing? Severed Head of State has a lot of anti-Christian imagery—but you guys are taking a stand against that. Why don't you talk about it?

MATT: We're taking a stand against blasphemy.

MRR: And it should be noted that we're doing the interview on Sunday. Was there a big Mother's Day crowd at the church today?

MATT: Yeah.

HANS: It's tough to get away from your mom.

LOGAN: Jesus had a mom…she didn't fuck. [laughter] I think my mom really does think that this is a Christian band, but when I send her a record she will realize it's not. Was that a serious question?

MRR: Yeah.

Logan: Oh, do you want me to answer seriously then?

DOUG: We're named after a Rudimentary Peni song.

MRR: I didn't ask what you were named after, I asked what it was like being a Christian band here. Are you just waiting for the chance to open for Zao?

HANS: One time Doug saw Zao.

DOUG: I went to this place in Arizona called The Church that did shows. It was, like, the second week that I lived there.

MRR: The Church—and you're surprised it was a religious show?

DOUG: Yeah. I mean, like in Philly they do shows at a church.

MRR: That's because they're all very religious folks.

DOUG: You know, sometimes people rent out churches for shows and some kid gave me a flyer and said 'You like hardcore?' So I went to the show and the first thing I saw were all these "Poison Free For Christ" shirts up on the wall. Actually, I bought weed at that show and got ripped off.

LOGAN: People have asked us if we're a Christian band before. I think it's pretty obvious at this point that we're not.

MRR: OK, so you're not a Christian band?

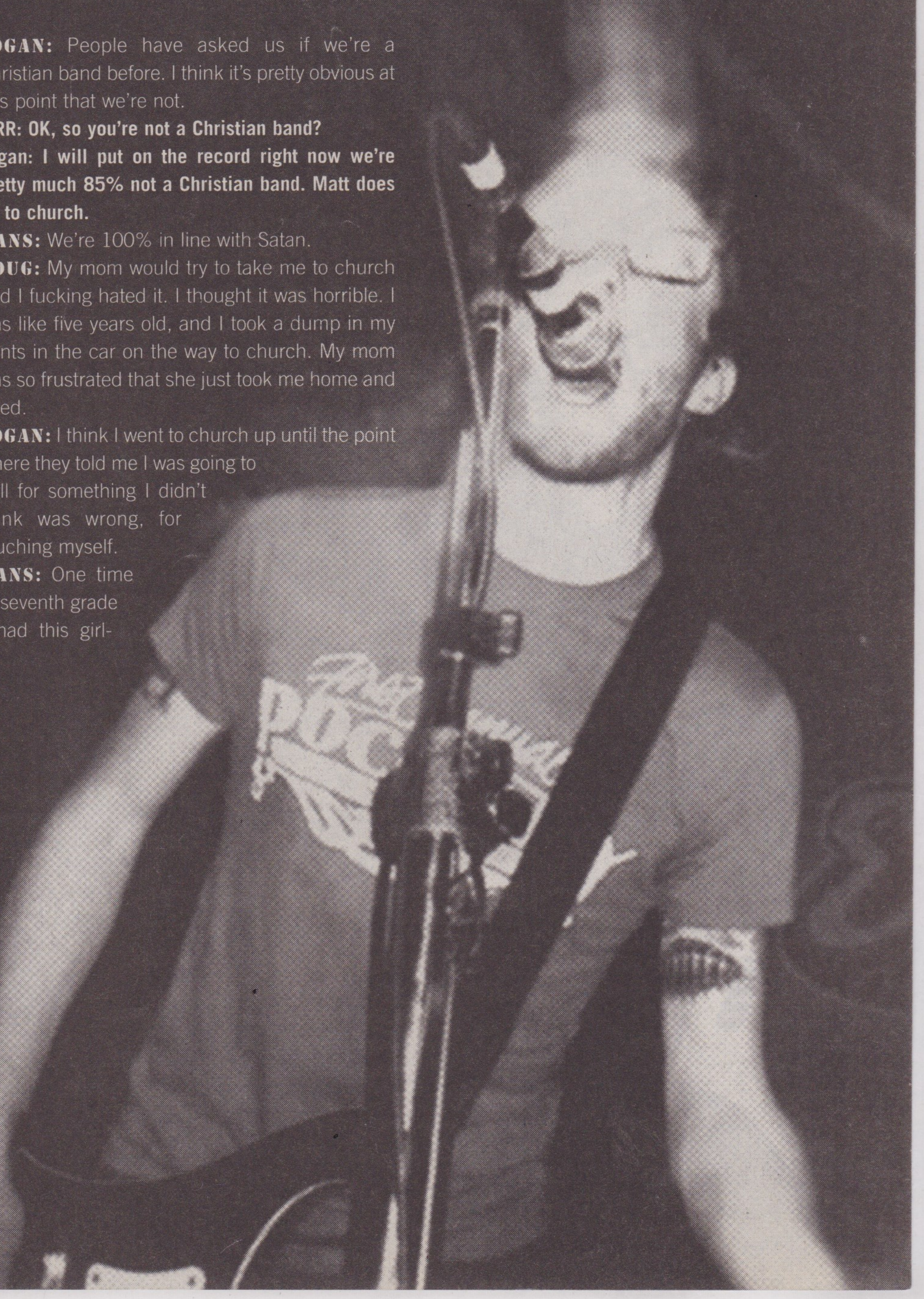
Logan: I will put on the record right now we're pretty much 85% not a Christian band. Matt does go to church.

HANS: We're 100% in line with Satan.

DOUG: My mom would try to take me to church and I fucking hated it. I thought it was horrible. I was like five years old, and I took a dump in my pants in the car on the way to church. My mom was so frustrated that she just took me home and cried.

LOGAN: I think I went to church up until the point where they told me I was going to hell for something I didn't think was wrong, for touching myself.

HANS: One time in seventh grade I had this girl-



friend who broke up with me because she said God told her that she should break up with me.

MRR: So how long has Army of Jesus been around for?

ALL: Seven months.

MRR: How'd that come about?

LOGAN: We were all at a show, and Doug had been talking to Matt about it…

DOUG: We were going to do a band called Burger Patrol, and it was going to be like Black Flag type stuff, and Alex was supposed to play bass but he lived in the wrong city, so we started this.

MRR: Besides Matt, who is in Coldera, were any of you guys in bands before Army of Jesus?

HANS: I was in stuff back home, but nothing that counts really.

MATT: Doug's been in a bunch of bad grindcore bands.

DOUG: Joke bands—Kids in Service with Satan.

MRR: So when you guys decided that you were going to start a band together did you have a specific type of band that you wanted to start?

LOGAN: 80s styled hardcore.

MATT: I don't know that we wanted to sound like anything, but that's what we listen to for influence. That's what I did, pull out old straightforward, no bullshit stuff.

MATT: We wrote eight songs the first practice.

HANS: We came at it wanting to do something straight forward and outside of the realm of that current war fetish trend.

MATT: Something other than generic crust or metal.

HANS: We didn't want high-contrast B&W pictures of tanks or maimed children.

[Conversation turns to Rick Rubin, then Flipper, then this…]

LOGAN: Matt used to be friends with a kid with one arm and he was called Flipper: true or false?

MATT: It was his idea!

MRR: How long was it from the time when you first got together practicing until you decided to record?

LOGAN: We were a band for three weeks when we recorded our demo.

MATT: We recorded the demo because I was going on tour with Signal Lost. We were like, "OK I'll bring some with me and give away." We came back and kept playing, and I guess we were like, "We can record [a record]."

LOGAN: Stan [from Signal Lost] said he'd record us for cheap and we all thought, "We like cheap."

HANS: Then he brought over his tape machine and it broke right afterward.

Logan: Sonically—I think it ate our cat.

MATT: We pretty much started on [releasing the record] right away.

LOGAN: Army of Jesus is the first band I've been around that's efficient. We'll get together and say, "Let's write two songs," and it'll get done.

MRR: I was going to say this before, but I'm pretty sure the first time I heard Army of Jesus was on MRR radio. I'll back up a little more. Matt, how did you end up filling in on drums for Signal Lost for part of their tour?

MATT: Stan called saying that they needed a drummer in a month for a tour. I gave it a little thought, but pretty much agreed to do it that night. I was fed up with being here and wanted to leave again.

MRR: Were you a big fan of them before?

MATT: Yeah. I saw Chris play with them. Back when Mark played I always had issues with his drumming. I liked the songs—I'm a pretty big fan of peace punk and melodic stuff, and I hadn't really ever gotten a chance to do that, so it was a good opportunity.

MRR: You guys made sure to record a demo before Matt left?

LOGAN: We recorded it with our friend Michael Landon.

MRR: Michael Landon?

ALL: Not the same guy.

HANS: So yeah, that was a five-song tape demo. Some of them are fucked up.

MATT: We apologize to anyone who got the fucked up ones.

HANS: [Matt] came back, and our first show was on Thanksgiving.

LOGAN: We had a little vegan Thanksgiving at the house and played to fifteen of our friends and my dad.

MRR: At this point how many shows have you played?

MATT: Twenty or so.

LOGAN: We've been actively playing shows for five months.

MRR: You've been a band for shorter than I thought.

LOGAN: And of course you're wondering, "How are they so good?"

HANS: All things through Christ.

MRR: You guys play a lot of shows out at the Lamar Pedestrian bridge, right?

LOGAN: We've played one and we're going do another.

HANS: I think you're mistaken: we play shows on the Lamar Punk Bridge.

MRR: Because people outside of Austin might not know about the bridge shows, can you talk about them?

HANS: It's a pedestrian bridge across Town Lake, which is actually a river. It runs parallel to the vehicular bridge. There are lights and electrical outlets along it.

LOGAN: I have no idea why there are electrical outlets on the bridge.

MATT: I think it's for us.

DOUG: The first show there was J Church, Storm the Tower, and Attack Formation. They did a round robin set.

HANS: That's the way it works—the bands share equipment and do like two songs, two songs or four songs, four songs.

LOGAN: That way if cops show up everyone has had a chance to play. It's the most fun I've ever had playing music. The energy is really good, and there's something about it being illegal that's exciting. As lame as it sounds, it's kind of fun that it could be shut down, that there could be ghetto birds shining down at you.

DOUG: I'd rather go to or play a show there than at some bullshit rock club.

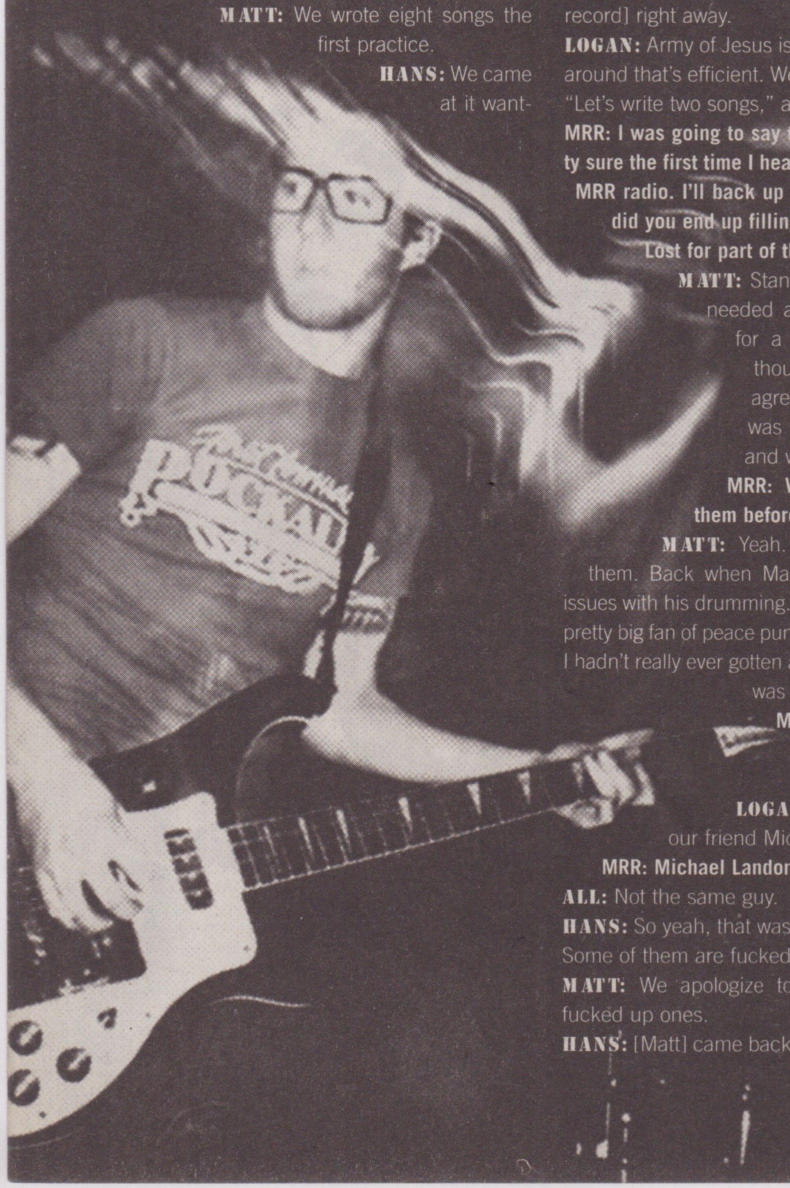
MRR: When you guys played the bridge a couple of weeks ago, I remember thinking that your set was the best time I've seen you and I was wondering was it just something about being on the bridge, full of adrenalin?

LOGAN: It was probably that and that our 7" had just come out the day before.

HANS: It's fun, out of the context of, as Doug said, some rock club.

LOGAN: For the most part people aren't there to fight, people aren't there to party—like how you go to some house party show where you have a good amount of people in the living room, but then you'll have twice as many people outside getting fucked up.

DOUG: People that are bummed because they're trying to get game with some girl and some punk band is making it harder.



LOGAN: But at the bridge everyone's there to see the show and dance and have a good time. It's one of the few places in Austin where people will dance and move.

MRR: I've also seen you guys play a few times at Emo's, which I don't think is a venue that's very conducive to good punk shows. I don't think that standing on a three foot high stage works with what most punk bands are after.

MATT: I don't have a problem with Emo's because it's one of the few places we have left. I feel like if we had three or four show spaces where we could regularly do shows, there'd be no need to do Emo's shows unless From Ashes Rise or someone like that came through. I think we all do prefer playing at the record store or playing in someone's living room.

DOUG: I don't like playing on a stage, it freaks me out.

HANS: The two times I've ever played in a band on a stage have been the two times Army of Jesus has played Emo's. I think it's dumb, and I understand the idea that everyone can see the band, but even just being physically above everyone is stupid.

DOUG: It makes it more of a spectacle; it's not really inclusive.

MRR: Your record just came out—you put it out yourself. How many did you make?

MATT: 500.

MRR: What are you doing with those records?

MATT: I've been actively trading some and we've all been selling them to our friends.

MRR: Besides the Coldera record, is this the first time any one of you has been involved in a record (playing on, putting out, etc.)?

LOGAN: I think I've done some CD-R things.

HANS: Yeah, demos, but I've never been on an actual record.

DOUG: I've been in bands that make half-baked attempts to put out a 7", but when it comes down to it and the band realizes it's going to cost $900 everyone's suddenly out.

MATT: It's going to be good because everyone put in money to help press the record, and I feel like everyone is going to help distribute it. We like to trade, it gets the music out there, and we have stuff to take with us on tour.

HANS: People do specific things, but nothing is resting on any one person's shoulders. I don't think any of us have felt overwhelmed through the process. It was divided so evenly that it was easy to do. I think that's how it came about so quickly; we just sat down and decided that we were going to do a record.

MATT: I've found it's easy to put out records. The only hard part is the money, but if you put your mind to it and actually work a little bit then it's easy as hell. Plus it's a staggered process, so if you want to take three months to put it out you can. People think, "We can't come up with the money all at once," but you don't have to. It's so much easier if you just leisurely go about it.

MRR: You guys are getting ready to go on tour, right? Do you have worries about going on tour as a relatively unknown band?

LOGAN: It's going to be fun. Of course, no one expects to go on their first tour and play Gilman and have 600 kids show up.

MATT: I think we're all looking at it in a positive way, just the fact that we get to go out of town and get to travel. BSA is going to go and they're gonna be fun. We get to see people that we haven't seen in a while

DOUG: Sometimes when bands get bigger and kind of "move beyond" the DIY thing they talk about horror stories like they ran out of gas, the van blew up.

MRR: "The van blew up" is a pretty legitimate horror story.

DOUG: I mean, "We had to sleep on someone's floor, we didn't have any food, we smelled bad, ten kids came to the show."

MATT: But that's all exciting. Right now I go to work full time to make money to scrape by, and I don't consider myself a cook. It's just something that I have to do to sustain myself.

DOUG: I'm serious about my job.

MATT: He sits in the back of the arcade and doesn't give change to people.

MRR: I noticed that the lyrics on the record are about arcade games.

HANS: Yeah, there's a lot of cheat codes.

DOUG: I write a lot of the lyrics, but everyone helps out. I read a lot of Guy Debord, Society of the Spectacle, and other situationist stuff.

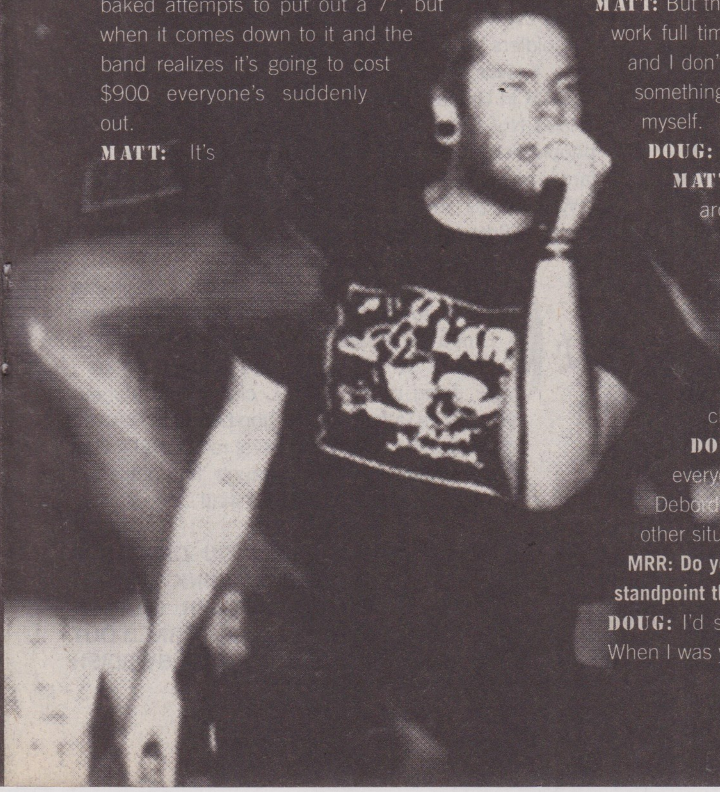
MRR: Do your lyrics come from the political standpoint that's expressed in that?

DOUG: I'd say that's a pretty big influence. When I was younger I was in a bunch of capital "A" anarcho-crust bands, and I've always thought that a lot of that stuff is good. After a while, "dogs of war" lyrics get tiresome. All punks know war is bad.

MATT: I think it's important to interpret this stuff personally and express it. You can regurgitate what Discharge said a million times like so many people do, but that gets boring. I always read lyrics when I buy a record.

DOUG: We were going to put explanations in the lyrics, but I couldn't do it without feeling like a dick. I don't think anything I write is so profound it needs to be explained.

HANS: Doug is trying to write things that are relevant to us and to him. Outside of that, if you can make a connection to what we're doing, that's awesome.



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ARMY OF JESUS

BASTARD SONS OF APOCALYPSE U.S. TOUR

JULY

19	Austin,TX w/ Kakistocracy
20	Houston,TX
21	Denton,TX w/ Seein Red, Kriegstanz and Bury the Living (@ J&J's Pizza)
22	Oklahoma City,OK @ the Conservatory
23	Lawrence,KS @ the Haunted Kitchen
24	Des Moines,IA
25	Minneapolis,MN
26	Madison,WI
27	Milwaukee,WI
28	St Louis,MO @ The Slaughterhouse w/ Eating Rats
29	Urbana,IL
30	Chicago,IL @ The Ice Factory w/ Skitkids
31	Indianapolis,IN

AUGUST

1	Louisville,KY
2	Cincinnati,OH
3	Ann Arbor,MI
4	Pittsburgh,PA @ Mr roboto project
5	Buffalo,NY
6	Albany,NY
7	Boston,MA @ a touch of class w/ Sleeper Cell
8	Providence,RI
9	Brooklyn,NY @ the Crow Space (aka Jane Doe) in brooklyn w/ asshole parade
10	New Brunswick,NJ @ 120 Hamilton St w/ Asshole Parade and I Object
11-14	Pointless Fest
15	Baltimore,MD w/ Disrespect and Ass-End Offend (@ Charm City Art Space)
16	Richmond,VA
17	Asheville,N.C.
18	Athens,GA
19	Chattanooga,TN
20	Memphis,TN
21	Dallas,TX

KNUGEN FALLER

About a year ago, an unexpected treat of an EP came across our desks here at Maximumrocknroll HQ. Combining undeniable pop hooks with a jagged, classic punk edge that calls to mind the classics of Swedish punk, Sweden's Knugen Faller managed to worm their way onto a number of year-end top tens and stay glued to our turntable with their Skellefte Stadshotell *EP. They have recently released another EP on the Wasted Sounds label, which essentially picks up where the first record left off while sounding just a bit fuller. Read on to find out about one of the bands making punk fun again! Introduction by Golnar Nikpour, interview by Ingela Olsén.*

MRR: HELLO! WHO ARE YOU GUYS AND WHY AM I TALKING WITH YOU?

Inge Ansvar: We are Knugen Faller. You are talking to us because our record company needs to expose us to the very lucrative American market.

MRR: YOUR DEBUT 7" *SKELLEFTE STADSHOTELL* HAS SOME REALLY CATCHY SONGS ON IT. I WANT TO KNOW: WHAT'S UP WITH ALL THIS FUZZ ABOUT SKELLEFTE? WHAT IS IT? IS IT YOUR MAIN INSPIRATION?

Inge Ansvar: Thank you. All the members of Knugen Faller grew up in Skellefteå. It's a small, industrial town in the north of Sweden where it's very easy to feel out of place if you are a little bit "different." There's really not that much to do if you are not into playing ice hockey or participating in religious activities. The boredom and emptiness we felt there is inspiration in itself.

Garderobert: Needless to say, there has been a lot of Skellefteå-bashing in our lyrics. However I've had pretty great times in Skellefteå as well. I'm really ambivalent towards that place. Most of my friends from there moved to Umeå around the same time I did, so there is hardly anyone I know left there. There is stuff to do there, but it seems to be harder to get things done in Skellefteå than in Umeå. And the punk scene isn't really booming. My parents still live there however, and when I go there in the summer I usually have a good time. There's way nicer lakes and stuff around Skellefteå than Umeå. That seems to be the thing about hometowns in general; they look nicer from a distance.

Fredda Frekvent: And for that EP, it was the theme we chose. The next EP will have another theme, maybe dragons or something like that...

MRR: TELL ME ABOUT THE MEMBERS OF KNUGEN FALLER AND HOW YOU GUYS ENDED UP PLAYING TOGETHER.

Garderobert: We all knew each other from Skellefteå. I think. Fredda, Silvia, and Inge might have even been living together at the time of our formation, so I guess it was only a matter of time before we ended up doing something together. In Knugen Faller I barely manage to play the bass. That must be the worst musical instrument ever! I'm also in Royal Downfall, Oktobr and We Are Soldiers We Have Guns.

Inge Ansvar: We formed over a bowl of soup at the *folkkök* in Umeå. *Folkkök* is the Swedish equivalent to "Food Not Bombs," but since there are no homeless people here most people who go there are cheap bastards, *proggare*, crusties, and people too lazy to cook. We are all involved in other bands. I'm in The (International) Noise Conspiracy and Totalt Jävla Mörker.

Silvia Sate: As we said, we grew up in the same town. When we all got together in Umeå the misfits got together with the misfits, and so did we. Before Knugen Faller, I sang in pop bands, classic/barbershop-choirs, a feminist hip-hop band, and played bass in a freaky medieval rock band called Medieval! Hahaha. I laugh my pants off every time I think about that!

MRR: ARE ALL OF YOU OBSESSED WITH OLD SWEDISH PUNK BANDS? OR IS THERE ANOTHER REASON THAT KNUGEN FALLER TURNED OUT SOUNDING LIKE AN OLD SWEDISH PUNK BAND?

Inge Ansvar: I am! We sound like an old Swedish punk band because we can't play our instruments!
Silvia Sate: I didn't know a shit about old Swedish punk before Knugen Faller, but since we started I realized that I am a natural! That has, of course, affected my interest for the genre.
Fredda Frekvent: I'm obsessed by the devil, and that's why I play drums like I do.
Garderobert: Not at all. I like most of the things I hear, but it's not like I'm collecting the stuff. I'm more into the Crass Records singles.

MRR: TELL US ABOUT THE NEW WAVE OF BANDS SOUNDING LIKE OLD PUNK BANDS IN UMEÅ!
Inge Ansvar: Some really cool bands are around at the moment! Check out Tristess, Disconvenince, The Lost Patrol Band, Stefan Granberg & The Problematics…
Garderobert: I wish Ungjävlar was still around. They were way cooler and younger than we are. There doesn't seem to be a lot of kids starting bands in Umeå at the moment.

MRR: HAVE YOU ALWAYS WANTED TO HAVE A BAND THAT SOUNDED LIKE KNUGEN FALLER? I ASK BECAUSE YOUR OTHER BANDS SOUND VERY DIFFERENT.
Garderobert: Not really, it wasn't necessarily on my to-do-list. I just figured it would be fun to play a style of punk rock I had never played before.
Inge Ansvar: It's been a wet dream for me for a while, yeah.
Fredda Frekvent: No, I've never dreamt of that, but here I am so what else can I do? I wanted to form a thrash metal band, but I couldn't play fast enough.

MRR: WHAT DO YOU TELL PEOPLE WHO CLAIM YOUR MUSIC IS POP AND NOT PUNK?
Inge Ansvar: I don't mind. It's usually the same people who say the same thing about The Ramones, so we are in good company.
Silvia Sate: It really pisses me off sometimes. I really empty my lungs out every time we play and than some schmuck comes and tells me that I play pop! That sucks.
Garderobert: I guess it really depends on who's saying it. If it's from within the punk scene it's only fun, since it's probably from the same kind of people that would be screaming "play faster" or "do an Anti-Cimex cover" in between songs, no matter what band is playing. We have, however, been getting some attention in the Swedish indie pop-scene lately and I wouldn't want them to call us a pop band. I feel we've got close ties with the punk scene, both ideologically and stylistically.

MRR: THE VOCALS BY SILVIA SATE ARE FANTASTIC! SYLVIA, HOW DID YOU END UP SINGING PUNK? WHICH SWEDISH FEMALE PUNK SINGERS ARE YOUR INSPIRATIONS?
Silvia Sate: A good combination of the right friends, location, mood, and time. Since I haven't listened to much punk I really don't have any Swedish female punk role models, but Inge introduced me to X-Ray Spex and Poly Styrene and that really appealed to my taste.
Inge Ansvar: Yeah, the whole band stands and falls with Silvia! She's got the intensity of someone like Poly Styrene, the feel of Carola Häggkvist, the vibrato of Jello Biafra, and the sheer brutality of Cimex-Jonsson!

MRR: HOW IS YOUR NEXT RECORDING GOING TO SOUND? WHAT CAN WE EXPECT TO HEAR FROM YOU NEXT? I KNOW YOU ARE RECORDING A NEW EP SOON, RIGHT?
Inge Ansvar: Yeah, we are recording a new EP and hopefully it will be catchy and full of chainsaw guitars.
Silvia Sate: We've become better musicians. It's a little more rough and faster.
Garderobert: Really raw!

MRR: WHAT ARE YOUR FAVORITE OLD SWEDISH PUNK EPS?
Garderobert: I really like everything that USCH!/Enola Gay did, and of course Tant Strul.
Inge Ansvar: I like so many. Some of my all time favorites are Kriminella Gitarrer – *Vårdad Klädsel,* Skabb – *78,* GBG Sound – *Björn Borg,* Grisen Skriker – *Grisen Skrikers,* Attentat – *Ge Fan I Mig,* Ebba Grön – *Totalpop,* and Besökarna – *Anna Greta Leijons ögon.*
Silvia Sate: Ebba Grön –*Vad Ska Du Bli.*

MRR: I LOVE YOUR BAND OUTFITS. WHAT'S THE IDEA BEHIND THEM? IT LOOKS LIKE YOU MADE THEM YOURSELVES — WHO'S THE CLOTHING DESIGNER IN THE BAND?
Inge Ansvar: They are a combination of spray paint and imagination. And poverty.
Fredda Frekvent: I just dug deep in my closet and found a Skidrow T-shirt, then I cut off the arms. There it is! But now we've bought ourselves new nice shirts, very fancy!

MRR: ARE YOU ALWAYS GOING TO WRITE SONGS WITH SWEDISH LYRICS?
Inge Ansvar: *Jajjamän.*

MRR: EVERYONE MUST BE WONDERING WHAT YOUR BAND NAME REALLY MEANS, CAN YOU TELL US THE HISTORY BEHIND IT?
Inge Ansvar: I could tell you, but then I would have to kill you.
Garderobert: All right, *I'll* tell you then. There's more to the aforementioned story of our formation at folkmoot. Me and Fredda Frekvent were going to rehearse with our other band, Royal Downfall, and Inge was probably bored and yelled "are you going to go rehearse with that fucking Knugen Faller band again?!" We all started laughing and drew out the plans for a new band, since it really sounded like something an old Swedish punk band would have been called. So Knugen Faller is a sort of misspelled direct translation of Royal Downfall. Misspelled since the Swedish king, Carl Gustav, is a dyslectic.
Silvia Sate: Yeah, the name Knugen Faller is really a spin-off effect from another band in which Fredda Frekvent and Garderobert plays – Royal Downfall. If you translate it into English it says: "The knig (king) falls"

MRR: AT LAST, GIVE US A LIST OF FIVE GOOD SWEDISH PUNK SONGS TO CHECK OUT AND UNDERSTAND WHAT KNUGEN FALLER IS ALL ABOUT!
Garderobert: Usch "Döda djur."
Inge Ansvar: Well, check out the EPs I recommended above and all the Ebba Grön LPs. While you are at it check out Asta Kask as well.

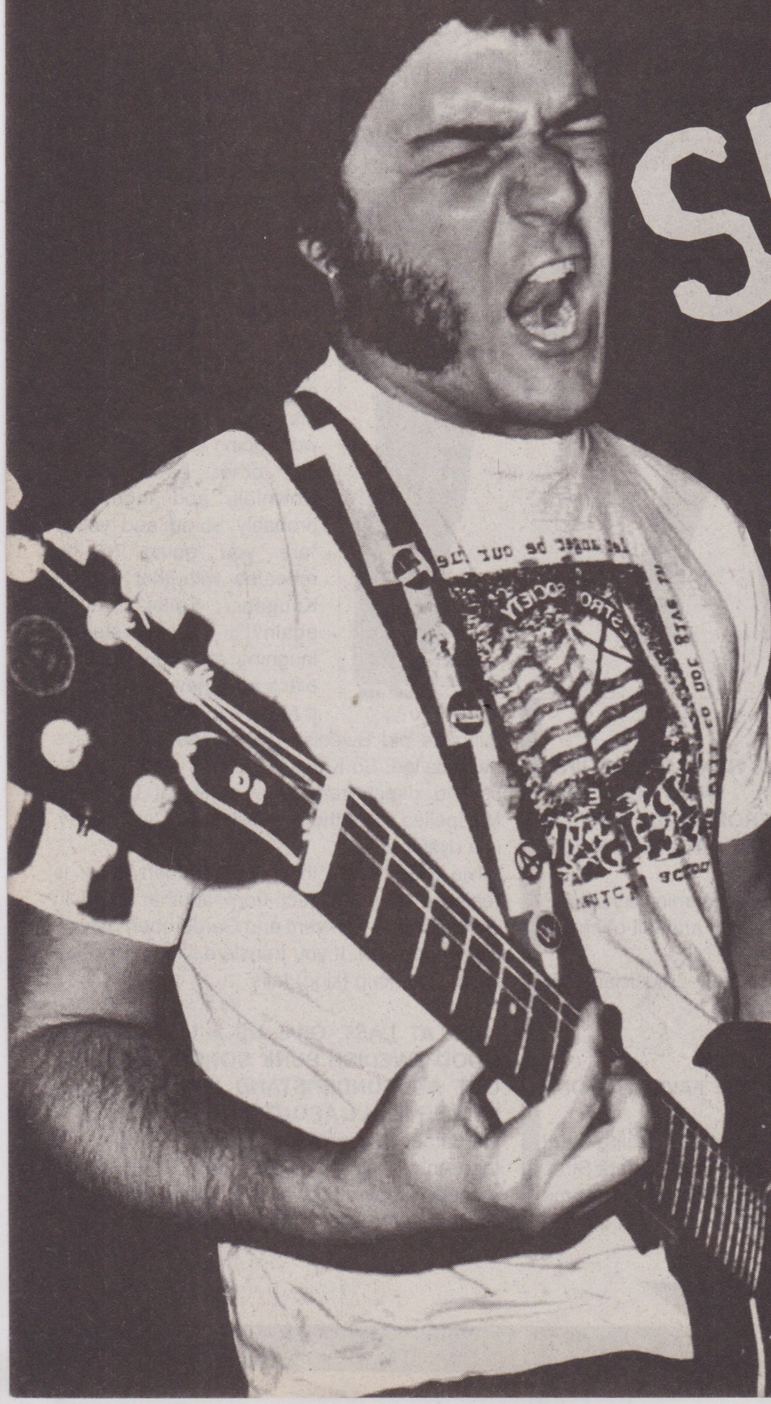
Sleeper Cell isn't your typical Boston hardcore band—probably because none of the members are Boston or Massachusetts natives, nor do they really attach themselves to any of the cliques or sub-scenes around here. They're certainly part of the DIY community, playing mainly in basement and hall spaces or at the local record store, Regeneration Records. They've been together a few years and have gone through a few lineup changes, with the present lineup being: Spencer (vocals), Jeff (guitar), Adam (guitar), Milosz (bass) and Chris (drums).

Sleeper Cell has an aggressive, fast-paced, high-energy sound with a strong political bent, and though the lyrics are more observational than ideological, the anger in the words and in Spencer's harsh vocals is obvious. Musically, their sound marries classic US hardcore to a Scandinavian influence, a formula for success shared by Deathreat and the late, great Talk Is Poison. Jeff was the drummer/vocalist for Balance of Terror, and one can certainly hear a similar musical approach in this band.

The band has released a pair of 7" EPs on Partners In Crime and Cries of Pain, and by the time this interview sees print, their debut album should have been released on Partners In Crime. Having heard the unmastered version, I can say it's already a candidate for the year's best.

Photos and May 2005 interview in Brighton MA by Al Quint.

SLEEPER CELL



MRR: So you're a Boston band, but none of you are from Boston originally. How did you end up here and how did you end up playing together?

Adam: Spencer and I moved here about the same time as Jeff. Spencer and I knew each other, and I hooked up with Jeff through an ad on the Internet looking for members to start a band. He knew some people who knew some people who knew Milosz. We all met to start a band, which never really got off the ground. Meanwhile, Spencer and I wanted to start a band and we asked Jeff and we all started a band with the original lineup. When that drummer left, Chris came in, and when the bassist left, Paul came in, and then Milosz.

MRR: Who was your original drummer anyway?

Spencer: My roommate Mike. He was my freshman roommate at Emerson. He was from Florida. He was the only guy that was into good music at that school, if you ask me, so I ended up hanging out with him. He ended up being my roommate and he played drums on the first demo.

MRR: Did he ever play live with you guys?

Jeff: His one and only performance was the first show at Amory Street.

Adam: That's the last time I saw him, too. As soon as we were done playing, he got up and left from the drum set and I've not seen him since.

Chris: I moved here five years ago because I got a job at the library. That's how I ended up here, from Pittsburgh.

MRR: How about you, Milosz? How did you end up here? You're from Poland originally?

Milosz: Yeah. I moved here five years ago. I met a woman.

MRR: So, Jeff, you're once again involved in a band with a provocative name. You were in Balance of Terror and now you're in Sleeper Cell. I asked you the same thing when you were with Balance of Terror, but have you had any problems with your name at all?

Jeff: No, not this time. It's funny with Balance of Terror because that seemed like kind of a cheesy, dated name when we picked it, which was before September 11, 2001. We sort of lived to regret it. The only problems [with Sleeper Cell] that I've heard about is people that have worn our t-shirts in public have actually been confronted because there's a picture of an Arab guy with an AK-47 and two businessmen growing out of him that says Sleeper Cell. I guess some people on the subway have demand explanations of what that means. But personally, I haven't had any problems.
Chris: It hasn't really caused any problems. If we were called the Terrorists or something like that, it would probably be more of a problem, but a lot of people don't seem to know what a sleeper cell is. Like, when we got stopped at the Hoover Dam. We were stopped by some kind of National Guard or whoever monitors the Hoover Dam.
Jeff: They asked me what the name was and I just told them Sleeper Cell, because they told me they were going to search the van and I figured it wasn't really worth it to lie if they were going to open up all our stuff. They didn't bat an eye. They just told us to leave because they didn't want to waste their time searching our bags and they made us drive around the Hoover Dam because they were too lazy. So we may have lucked out on that one.
MRR: Did you have a bumper sticker on your van or something?
Jeff: Just 'cause we were driving a black van at, like, one in the morning across the Hoover Dam.
Chris: But I've also had people ask me what is a sleeper cell? Is that a room where you sleep? This van here—is that the sleeper cell? [laughter]
Jeff: People thought the loft in the van was the sleeper cell.
Chris: I really thought it would cause more problems than it has. Maybe if we tried to cross international borders, but we haven't tried to do that yet. We'll see.
MRR: It's funny, because I have one of your pins on my jacket and when I flew to Chicago a few months ago, I took it off because I didn't want any problems going through airport security.
Jeff: That's probably not a bad idea. It's pretty amazing how people fail to grasp any sort of irony in the idea that someone who was a terrorist would walk around with a shirt or a patch or a button that said something identifying himself as a terrorist. The reason why I like the name is because the whole idea of proclaiming yourself a sleeper cell is counterintuitive. Someone being offended by it would make that person sort of an idiot.
MRR: Well, these are the times when irony is supposed to be dead.
Chris: It's like advertising that you're this underground operative. [laughs] When we concluded our last interview, we said our name means we don't know whom to be afraid of, either the terrorists or the people in our government.
MRR: The terrorists, the government, or the people themselves.
Jeff: Exactly. Just the idea that you're supposed to be afraid of everybody walking on the street, afraid that they're going to try to blow you up or overthrow the government. At the same time, there's all this really scary shit going on in the power structure of society which goes largely ignored, because we're too busy installing surveillance cameras outside of our houses to prevent someone from setting off a suicide bomb in Oklahoma or Iowa. People in Middle America are afraid of these unlikely terrorist attacks; meanwhile their rights and their futures are being stripped away by the administration that they elected.
MRR: In some ways, 9/11 is the best thing that ever happened to this administration because it's enabled them to put those things into effect.
Jeff: Undoubtedly. The war on terror is a million times better than the Cold War because while the threat of a nuclear strike was always in the back of people's minds, 9/11 was right in our backyards—quite literally, for some of us. It's just a reminder every day that you could die because of things that are completely out of your control. There's really nothing scarier than that.
Chris: The Soviet Union was an actual enemy whereas fighting against terrorists is limitless.
Jeff: It gives the government sort of an avatar that they can place on anything that they want to condemn, whether it's protesters in a city, or a foreign government. Pretty much anything that they don't like can somehow be linked to this very amorphous concept of terror and the big Axis of Evil in a way that they tried to do with communism, but it really didn't work quite as well.
Chris: It wasn't as easy because it was more of a concrete thing.
Jeff: Right. Communism had a whole set of values and rules whereas the very nature of being a terrorist is being secretive and hard to spot. So now Critical Mass [a monthly activist activity for bike riders] is terrorism and eating ice cream on the wrong side of the street is terrorism.
MRR: Questioning the president is terrorism. Questioning the motives of the government is terrorism. Milosz, were you living in the US when 9/11 happened? I'm curious, having grown up in country such as Poland, where the government was restrictive at times—I'd like to hear you compare what it was like living in Poland compared to what it's like living in the US now.
Milosz: Poland now is kind of like here. We have almost everything over there, like McDonald's and stuff like that. But it's hard to get a job. We never had any enemies outside, like the US, so I never felt any threat over that when I used to live in Poland. Here now, I feel safe, but there is still something to worry about.
MRR: Traditionally, not a lot of Boston hardcore bands have had a strong political message. Generally, the more popular bands have either been apolitical or maybe a bit more conservative. Do you feel that Boston's reputation as a more conservative scene is justified and has the audience here responded to your somewhat more political message?
Chris: I'd say that besides the sort of DIY, basement type of bands like Positive Reinforcement and Send More Cops, et alæoutside of that, I'd say for better or worse, the entire Boston hardcore scene traditionally has been and continues to be apolitical to conservative. I don't know if anybody pays attention to what we're saying or if they can hear the lyrics.
Spencer: Let's be honest. No one really cares about Sleeper Cell in Boston. [laughter]
Jeff: In a strange way, we fall sort of between the cracks, not really being doctrinaire. We don't want to teach people things, really. We don't write songs that are instructional or informational. Most of the lyrics are fairly reactionary. As far

as the politics of the band go, I don't think we fall into the leftist sort of punk thing in Boston; we just don't have enough of a message in what we're doing. We're also not in line with the traditional Boston hardcore of a more tough, hard kind of hardcore. It's just a weird thing. I feel like the scene here is really diverse but also really segregated. It's been a really hard thing for us, because I don't think we belong to any of the Boston "scenes" as much as maybe we feel like we belong to the DIY scene here.

MRR: That's why I like it because, personally, I don't feel like part of any sub-scene either, except maybe for the DIY thing.

Jeff: It's weird because, on one hand, I'm happy not being pigeonholed, but on the other hand, I hate feeling alienated from the scene—which is definitely something that this band, as a whole, feels.

MRR: Let's talk about some of the songs on the new album. Starting with "Job Description," the one line that really stuck out was, "Give me back my fucking life."

Spencer: Jeff wrote that one. I have to sing it, but at the time I was unemployed.

Jeff: It's funny, I actually wrote it when I was in a long stretch of temp jobs and we didn't learn the song until like a year later when both Spencer and I were unemployed [laughs], but it's appropriate since I just started a new job this week.

Spencer: I'm still unemployed.

Chris: For a while, I was the only full-time working member of the band.

MRR: And you pretty much like your job, don't you? Kids' librarian?

Chris: Yeah. I can't think of anything else I'd rather be doing. It feels good, and I provide a good service for the community. I'm happy to provide public service for people. I can't really complain.

Jeff: It's certainly not an anti-work song. I don't have anything against having a job. Like I said, most of our songs come from a more reactionary place, and working temp jobs is just a really shitty way to make a living. It's basically the white collar version of outsourced labor. The whole idea of working for a company that sells you to other companies is just really demoralizing and dehumanizing. Having to go in nine-to-five and sign out every time you want to take a piss, knowing that five out of every ten dollars is going to another company—there's just no way you can feel good about that kind of work. So I would sit there and write songs instead, and that's pretty much where that came from.

Milosz: In this country, you have a choice. If you don't like this job, you can go apply at Dunkin' Donuts and go work there or be a bike messenger like Adam. But in Poland you have this job and you have to do it because if you're going to complain, they're going to fire you, and they have ten other people for that position.

Adam: The standard for us middle class white kids is to get pushed into college right after high school. They don't know why they're going, and they don't know what they want to do with their lives.

MRR: That's what I did.

Adam: Their parents tell them to go there, they choose some major that looks good, and they graduate and get a job, because that's what they're supposed to do. They inherit debt that they're going to end up working their entire lives to pay off, and they reach middle age and realize that it was big lie, a big mistake. Then they're trapped with thousands of dollars of debt on their hands and nothing to do about it but go to work the next day.

I FEEL LIKE THE SCENE HERE IS REALLY DIVERSE BUT ALSO REALLY SEGREGATED. IT'S BEEN A REALLY HARD THING FOR US, BECAUSE I DON'T THINK WE BELONG TO ANY OF THE BOSTON "SCENES" AS MUCH AS MAYBE WE FEEL LIKE WE BELONG TO THE DIY SCENE HERE.

MRR: I used to call it being dead for eight hours every day, when I was working my first few jobs out of college. I fucking hated it and thought, "What's the point of doing something I loathe every day?" That was the feeling I got from that song. I could have sung that in 1984.

Adam: Yeah. When I'm delivering stuff to buildings downtown and it's 5:00 and everyone's going home, you watch the elevators come down and they empty out these people that look completely lifeless. You can see in their eyes that they feel like they've wasted their entire day.

Jeff: And yet, like Milosz was saying, America, as bad as it is, is still one of the best countries in the world to work in. Workers here are treated better than most places, but if you ask most anyone if they like their jobs, they'll say no. Most people, if you ask them if they feel like they're contributing something meaningful with what they do, they'll say no. And that's just a horrifying thought to me. Life's so short, to think that in order to survive you have to give up time that you could be spending on something rewarding—that was the whole song on a very basic level.

MRR: It's the whole thing of balancing your ideals with practicality, surviving, having debt. Also, the other thing is people working for benefits, which you don't even get a lot of the time.

Adam: Your retirement is ripped out from under you by some scumbag CEO who's going to jail.

MRR: And they're trying to get rid of Social Security, too. So we get screwed no matter what.

Chris: Retirement is frightening. It doesn't look like there's any way out of it. I guess they pegged retirements to the stock market and then calculated that investment as if the stock market would continue to perform at this high rate, so there would be that money to pay people's retirements. Because the stock market didn't perform at the [touted] rate, now they don't have the money to pay the retirements out. So they can either bankrupt themselves and pay the retirements, or not pay the retirements. So there's no way out of it. I'm not looking forward to retiring.

Jeff: Especially now that the few programs we have to deal with the inadequacies of the economy and the unfairness of the capitalist labor market, such as Social Security, are the prime target of Bush's domestic policy. He wants to do away with the one good social program we have left, to try to tip the scales back a little bit towards the people who don't have choices like going back to school and getting a new job.

MRR: It's the biggest thing from the New Deal, and they want to get rid of it. It's been the most successful social program in the history of this country. They try to present it as, "You're not getting to invest your own money," when it was never meant to be an investment program, but an insurance program.

Jeff: It's the exact opposite, because the stock market collapsed and people lost their entire lives' savings. People were ruined and there was a way to combat that to make sure it didn't happen again. Of course [laughs], the logical thing is, let's take it and invest it in the stock market and convince people that it's dead anyway.

Chris: It's always amazing when you talk to conservatives, they will say we need to go back to before FDR ruined this country and turned it communist. Yes, the depression—bring it back! [laughs] But I hear that line from conservatives a lot.

MRR: The robber barons.

Chris: The Gilded Age!

Jeff: It's funny though—and this is something that I hear a lot because my girlfriend is FDR's great granddaughter—but George Bush is constantly

comparing himself to Roosevelt as a war president and someone who's going to get the country out of a crisis. There's really nothing more enraging than hearing that because it just couldn't be any further from the truth. He wants to take away the last leg that the poor people in this country have to stand on.

MRR: A few months ago, when they were starting to push Social Security reform, they were claiming that FDR never intended it to be permanent. The Republicans were trying to twist his words.

Jeff: That's just an outright lie. Just like most of the press releases with this president.

MRR: "Thin Blue Lie" and "Cop of the Year" are obviously about run-ins with cops, and I know that Sleeper Cell is the most criminal band in Boston, since both Spencer and Adam have had problems with the law [laughter]. Spencer, were those songs inspired by your particular incident? Let's talk about what happened.

Spencer: It was maybe a year and a half ago. I was in the park and I was walking by the subway on the corner of Boylston and Tremont. A cop stopped me and asked me about my bullet belt that I was wearing. I told him that it wasn't real but it didn't really matter and, long story short, I got frisked and all this other crap and I had to go to court. Judges thought that I should be punished for it, so we started going to trial and I had to get new lawyers, it was really expensive and they charged me, basically, with possession of a deadly weapon and possession of ammunition without a license, which are two felonies. If I lost, I was facing up to six years, apparently. But I ended up getting a really great lawyer who helped me out a lot, and I got it reduced to nothing. I was on probation for a year and, as of April 6, I am off probation and now it's technically supposed to be erased from my record. But it was quite expensive and both the songs are about not only the experience, but specifically the cop himself, Terrence Leonard. He got an award for cop of the year. Apparently, he stopped a robbery-in-progress of an old woman, or something like that, which I thought was his job but apparently is an act of heroism. I think anybody would have tried to stop that if they could. Since he was off-duty, he got an award for that, but he also likes to bust kids with bullet belts.

Adam: Wasn't there something about them charging you under the PATRIOT Act at one point?

Spencer: Yeah, in the way they were able to get the belt removed and held even though, technically, I wasn't under arrest until I went to the summons. They were able to hold my belt as evidence without me actually being charged with anything, so it was kind of bizarre and the cop himself probably had it for quite some time.

Jeff: My favorite part is that they sent you a letter claiming they had test-fired every round from the bullet belt in an actual M-60 machine gun.

Spencer: Yeah, they shipped the belt off. They sent it to a lab in, I think, Springfield and from there they shipped up an M-60 from wherever, from the Pentagon for all I know, and they test-fired my belt. It was just so stupid. Obviously, none of them fired. One round apparently would have fired if it had powder in it, or residue in it, which is basically like saying, "Well, if it was a bullet, it would have shot." So they were trying to charge me with and it just got thrown out because my lawyer was able to argue, "I can't even believe we're doing this. This is the dumbest thing of all time." That was basically my entire defense.

MRR: How about you Adam? Your incident was just a few days ago but it'll hopefully be over by the time this comes out.

THE MOST LOGICAL THING, WHEN DRUNK AT 3:00 IN THE MORNING ON A FRIDAY, WHEN YOU SEE A COP BURYING A KID'S FACE IN THE HOOD OF A CRUISER, IS TO YELL THAT ALL COPS ARE BASTARDS.

Adam: It's not as exciting. The most logical thing, when drunk at 3:00 in the morning on a Friday, when you see a cop burying a kid's face in the hood of a cruiser, is to yell that all cops are bastards [laughter]. As I was riding away on my bike, I heard someone telling me look out from behind me, and there was a cop chasing me down the road. Didn't tell me to stop but tapped me off my bike and arrested me and ruined my bike, and that's the end of that story.

Chris: Is there some kind of new initiative against parties or something?

Adam: Yeah. There was a crackdown that night on college parties, which was weird considering that maybe one of the ten kids arrested that night was actually a student. The girl charged with the most serious charges—she was charged with assaulting an officer—she's a 32-year-old woman who's working, having a party at her house for her birthday. But I guess we're all college kids on Friday nights in Boston. It's weird, because the city caters to college kids so much, and they try to give this impression to parents that it's a safe playground for their kids to go to for nine months out of the year, and that's what college kids are expected to do.

MRR: It seems as though the crackdown happened after that woman got killed last year by the cop, when people acted up when the Patriots and Red Sox won. *[A 21-year-old Emerson College student named Victoria Snelgrove was killed by a so-called "less-lethal" weapon, a pepper spray gun, after the Red Sox beat the Yankees and the cops were trying to disperse the crowd].*

Jeff: Yeah. They're trying to use that as an excuse for cracking down on college parties, when it was a cop who didn't know how to use his less-lethal gun. He was firing indiscriminately and hit and killed a girl. And somehow that's the fault of college parties, because some girl was happy that the Red Sox beat the Yankees.

MRR: Some of your songs also take issue with religion, such as "Crucifiction" and "At the Altar," on the new record. One thing that comes to mind is how individuals are attempting to turn this country into more of a theocracy.

Spencer: I wrote "Crucifiction." That one was more of a response to my own personal disagreement with Christianity. I just think it's horseshit and that's that. As far as the whole theocracy, I definitely see that. People try to say that it's not going towards some sort of religious base, but the line between church and state is getting very blurred. Increasingly, people are electing born-again Christians and pretend like it's not going to influence the politics, when it's obvious [it will].

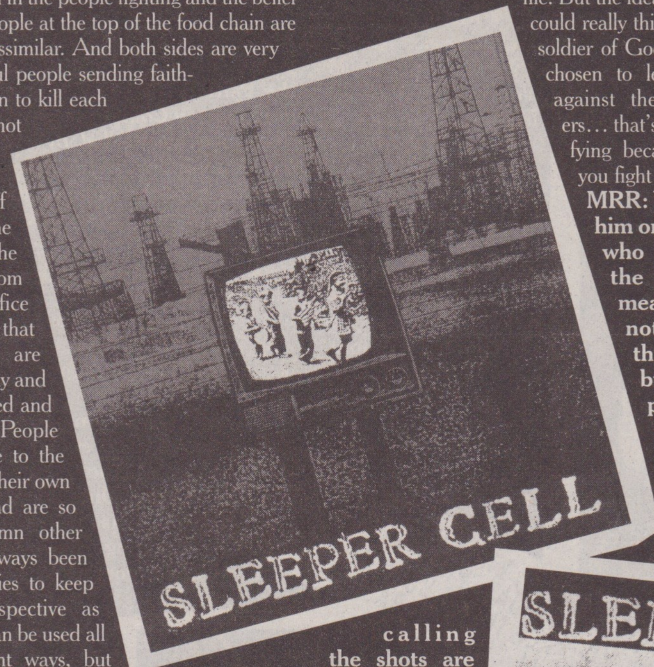
Chris: Jesus Christ is George W. Bush's favorite political philosopher.

MRR: If Christ did reappear and run for office, he'd probably be condemned as a terrorist or something. If he preached his real message, they'd be saying he was a left-wing loony or something.

Chris: Or just a crazy guy in a robe speaking Hebrew.

Jeff: Well, that's what's so bizarre about the way that Middle East politics are being reported and viewed right now in the Western media: it is portrayed as this fight to make sure that the Middle East doesn't slide into a theocracy or become completely controlled by fundamentalists. When you see that the President of the United States of America is a born-again Christian, and you look at the belief system of a born-again Christian and a fundamentalist Muslim, they're pretty much in line about most things. It's really just bizarre, but no one draws those parallels and people can't see that there isn't one fundamen-

talism that is tame, and then this other one that is dangerous. Is this because there's a different kind of warfare going on in one place than there is in another, because we have tanks and planes and they have car bombs and they're insurgents and we're trained soldiers? Basically, the sort of principles that are at the head of all these problems, the belief systems that are being instilled in the people fighting and the belief systems of the people at the top of the food chain are really not that dissimilar. And both sides are very rich and powerful people sending faithful poor people in to kill each other; it's just not that different. I think that's one thing that a lot of the lyrics on the LP deal with—the ideas of martyrdom and self-sacrifice and compassion that these religions are offering in this day and age are just fucked and so backwards. People turn a blind eye to the inadequacies of their own belief system, and are so quick to condemn other people's. I've always been someone who tries to keep religion in perspective as something that can be used all kinds of different ways, but more and more today, it's just a negative force in the world.



Adam: The thing that scares me is, like Spencer said, Bush won this election fair and square, it seems.

MRR: Supposedly...

Jeff: At least more fair than last time.

Adam: Supposedly. But I get the feeling that the majority, even here in Massachusetts, is going along with it. I don't know if they themselves are evangelical or born-again, but on a whole, the country is letting the Christian right have their say in what goes on right now, especially with the judicial nominations. On one hand, in the Middle East we have these terrorists like bin Laden who don't really care about the destruction of half the world, and at the same time, Bush and these evangelical Christians—their entire belief system is centered upon doomsday and the Apocalypse and the return of Christ. It works out in their favor that we have this enemy who's not only intent on destroying as much as they are, but who is also as faithful as they are and willing to march to whatever battle they need to.

MRR: I think this area is a little more secular than other parts of the country and there's some resistance to the encroachment of theocracy. The Catholic Church certainly has a lot of sway but, compared to the so-called red states, there's a big difference.

Adam: Definitely, but since the beginning of the election campaigns, there's a lot more Bush stickers on SUVs floating around Boston.

MRR: True. They're leaving it on their vans and putting it in your face, I think.

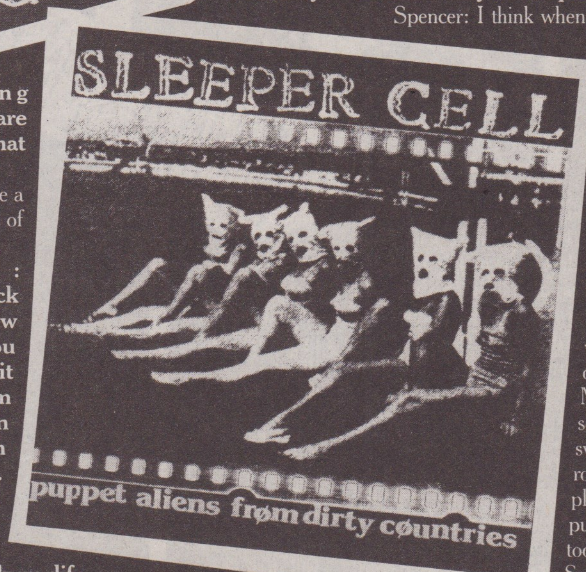
Chris: We do have a Mormon governor [Mitt Romney].

MRR: Yeah. Well, the reason we have a right-wing Republican governor, in my opinion, is because the Democrats didn't run a good candidate.

Jeff: As far as religion and politics, I think that the scary thing about it is that these people actually believe what they claim they believe. Mitt Romney is a frickin' Mormon, and George Bush might really think that he's a warrior of the apocalypse. When you're just thinking it's oil money and political backscratching—at least that's comprehensible to me. But the idea that this guy could really think that he's a soldier of God who's been chosen to lead this war against the non-believers… that's fucking terrifying because how do you fight that?

MRR: Well, either him or the people who are pulling the strings. I mean, he may not believe that himself, but the people involved in his administration who are actually calling the shots are following that agenda.

Chris: They're a scary bunch of people.



MRR: Getting back to the new album, you recorded it at the Jam Room in South Carolina. Did you approach the recording of the album differently at all? How long did it take?

Adam: We didn't really approach it much differently than we have in the past, but it was interesting to work at a studio that was run like a professional studio. We were used to just coming in and setting up with the main producer and then tracking with someone else. It was a whole new experience for recording. It went really smoothly compared with recording with smaller home studios. In the end, it came out sounding great. It only took three days to do the entire LP.

MRR: Who did you work with?

Chris: Jay Matheson. He recorded a lot of the best hardcore albums of the 90s, I think. He's kind of a genius when it comes to sound. I've recorded with a lot of bands, at a lot of different studios over the years, but I've never encountered someone who has his depth of knowledge of how sound works before. It was really great to work with him, plus he's fun. He's very funny and has a very thick Southern accent. We went there because we like the sound of a lot of the records that were recorded there. He managed to make bands sound really big but also kept the rawness in there, or the "grind," as he calls it.

MRR: Who are some of the other bands he's worked with down there?

Chris: In/Humanity, Assfactor 4, Talk Is Poison.

Milosz: Born Dead Icons.

Chris: From Ashes Rise, No Parade, Kylesa, Damad.

Jeff: The really good late-90s Southern hardcore certainly gravitated towards that place, and basically through friends and acquaintances recommending it; also just seeing the ad in *Maximum Rocknroll*, we were just like, "That's not that far away. We can try to drive down there and play a few shows." The shows didn't really happen but we had a vacation and it was fun. It was a great experience because, on one hand, it's like a professional environment for us because he really knew what he was doing, he had great equipment. On the other hand, he let us stay in his house and watch TV, so it was a lot of fun. I'd definitely recommend it to anyone who has a little bit of money to spend on a recording.

Chris: Were the songs written any differently? They had kind of the same subject matter.

MRR: Definitely the same subject matter. I notice that there's a bit more intricacy in some of the songs, though. They seem a little more fully-developed.

Spencer: I think when it's all put together and mastered, it'll all flow. Hopefully.

Jeff: We wanted it to stand up as a full-length, and not be one of those hardcore records that's just two 7"s slapped together. As far as any difference, it was just the natural progression of writing songs that we wanted to write and the band sort of getting its sound. Milosz wrote one of the songs, so having the bass switch probably played a role, but we didn't try to plan it out because it's punk. You can't really have too much of a plan for it.

Spencer: One of the songs was written in a week—not even.

Jeff: Yeah, it was like the day before. We needed a song for the end.

Chris: We needed a song to just finish the album, that we wrote a couple of days before we left.

Jeff: "Aftermath." I think it was a week before we had to go.

MRR: Milosz, which song did you write?

Milosz: "Thin Blue Lie."

Jeff: But, actually, Adam and Milosz and had tried to start a band like a year or two ago and that was a song we were playing and I really liked it. [That band] just never really went anywhere, but we managed to bring the song back.

MRR: Anything I missed?

Jeff: We would like to thank everyone who helped out on tour last year. We can be reached at
Sleeper Cell, c/o Adam Gandleman
34 School St., Brighton, MA 02135.
E-mail: tragic_insane@yahoo.com

Thee Merry Widows

Interviewed by Beth Loudmouth

MRR: Name, age, what you wield in the band.
Mistress Mandy: Amanda Clements, a.k.a. Mistress Mandy, 30 years old, rhythm guitar.
Nishone: 28, lead guitar.
Nikki Nightbreed: 25, upright bass.
Andrea: 27, drummer.
Miss Eva von Slut: I sing, play a theremin, and try not to break anything onstage. I'm old enough to remember a lot of the 80s.

MRR: Do you all have day jobs?
Mandy: Mistress Mandy does.
Eva: I work at a San Francisco tattoo shop. I won't tell you which one because I have enough stalkers already. I also sing for the legendary Bay Area punk band The Insaints and I am a burlesque dancer too.

Nishone: I am a kindergarten teacher.
Andrea: I'm a bartenderess.
Nikki: Union Carpenter. Local 22.
MRR: So why the name Thee Merry Widows?
Eva: Like a corset, you know, a merrywidow? I heard this awesome rumor that a "merry widow" is the female version of a circle jerk and that's why we names ourselves that but that's not really true.
Andrea: Because that's the name of Rose and Blanche's old dance troupe on the "Golden Girls."
Nikki: It's better than being called the "Pink Panties," which a former member wanted to us to called!
MRR: If you're merry, does that mean you are a happy band?
Mandy: I'd say we are a pretty jovial group of girls. We get along well with each other and have a good time.
Eva: I'm happy to be doing some touring! We're off to England and Scotland next week. Can't wait to make out with guys with super pale skin and cute accents. Huzzah!
Nishone: I am genuinely happy.
MRR: How would you describe your music?
Nishone: Garage punk with a heavy Psychobilly influence.
Mandy: Punk with a Psychobilly edge.
Andrea: We're going for the Psychobilly thing. I think we're kinda surfy-punk-garage-y cause we're trashy. Plus we do practice in a garage (Nikki's).
Nikki: Just think of us as the soundtrack to a cheesy 80s horror movie.
Eva: We're like punk-garage-surfabilly-psychobilly with tits!
MRR: So the band got off to a rough start; you've been through a lineup change. Anyone ever get beat up at band practice?
Mandy: Not since I've been in the group.
Nishone: No problems with the new lineup.
Nikki: All I gotta say is *someone* out there is very lucky.
Eva: Thee Merry Widows are like the Bloods and Crips. You want out, we gotta jump you out.
Andrea: Yeah there have been a few riding crop whips and whaps with guitar cords.
MRR: Where'd you all find each other?
Eva: Nikki Nightbreed and I have been friends for a million years and were in a short-lived punk band together. How in the hell did we meet everyone else? I don't even remember.
Mandy: Nicole recruited me at The Rumblers [car club] annual party. My boyfriend is in The Rumblers and upon mentioning to Nicole that his girlfriend is a rhythm guitarist, she demanded an introduction from him. It just so happened that Thee Merry Widows needed some rhythm guitar and I was available.
Andrea: I heard from a friend they needed a female drummer and I wanted to play the drums!
Nishone: I met Nikki and Miss Eva at Punk Rock Sushi and a show.
MRR: Who and what are your influences?
Eva: The older I get the more I listen to the shit I was into at 15 years old: Danzig, English Beat, Descendents, the Misfits... obviously, the Runaways, and Wendy O'Williams. I was really inspired to have an all-girl psychobilly band by the Queen B's and the Dypsomaniaxe. I love love love Demented Are Go, best psychobilly of all time!!! Long Tall Texans, the soundtrack to Dario Argento's *Suspiria*, old Nekromantix. Slayer!!! The Hookers, and Electric Frankenstein.

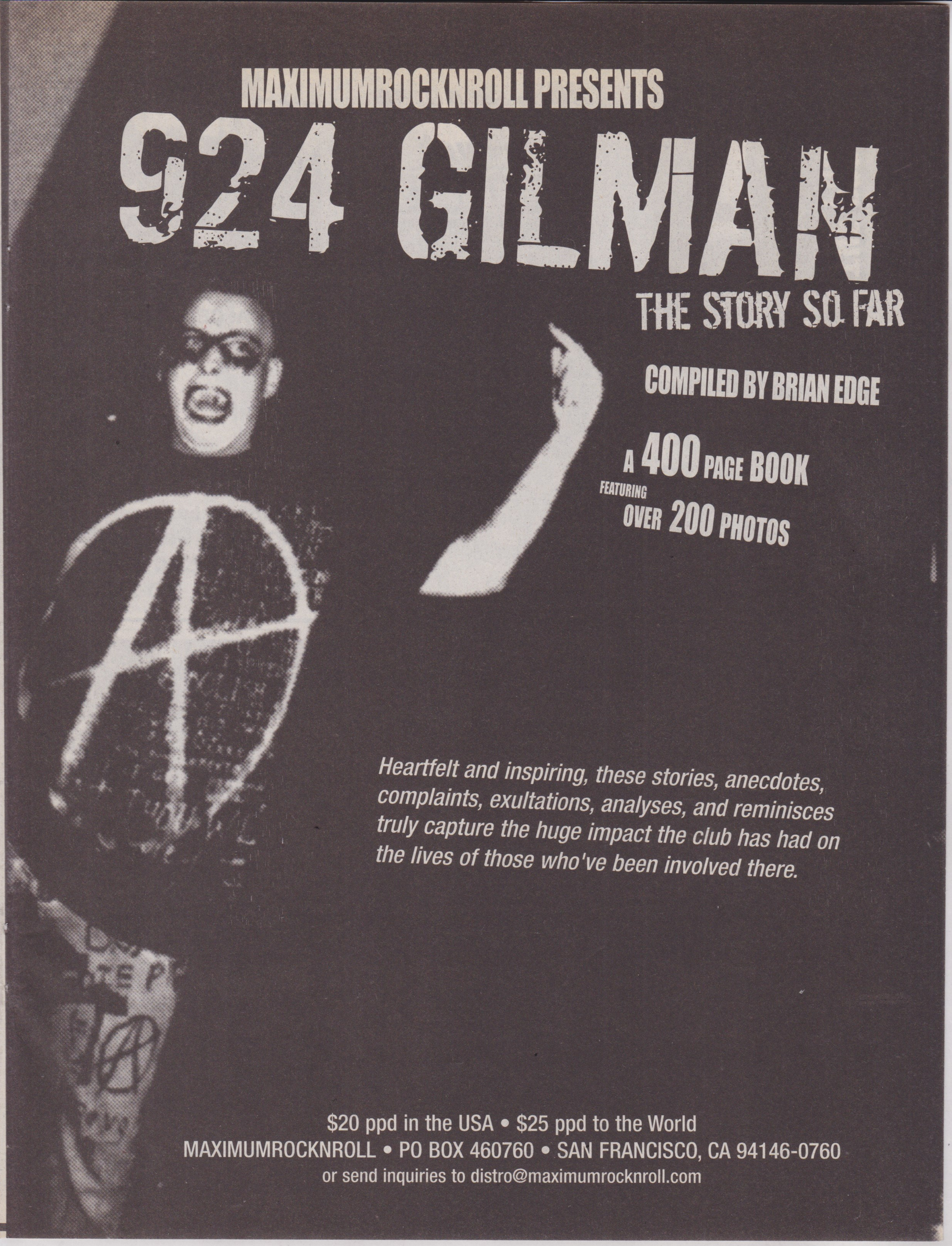
Nishone: Musically, I am influenced by a lot of punk and hardcore bands. In Thee Merry Widows it is all about the psychobilly styling!
Mandy: I am influenced by 60s garage style and old school punk.
Andrea: My old roommate Sammy and my boyfriend Angel Nova (of the Phenomenauts). He's *hunky*!
MRR: What about your wheels? What kinda car do each of you have?
Nikki: I have a '67 Plymouth Fury that has a rad motor in it that I built from the ground up!
Andrea: I have a Civic Hatchback that can fit an upright bass and my drums and another person. I also have a '61 Comet that can fit five kegs!
Eva: Sadly, my 1976 crappy Cadillac Hearse with flames has been towed by the San Francisco parking department. I had so many goddamned parking tickets they towed the fucker away.
Nishone: I know you don't care about a '99 Nissan Sentra that has a broken mirror that flaps in the wind.
Mandy: I'm currently cruising a big black '93 Mercury Grand Marquis.
MRR: Do you think a car makes a man?
Mandy: It helps.
Andrea: I think the man makes the car and fixes the car if I'm lucky.
Eva: I'd settle for any man with transportation at this point. I am soooo sick of riding the Muni bus.
Nikki: I don't think the car makes the man. You can't fuck a car... or can you?
MRR: Miss Eva, you are pretty involved in burlesque and fetish stuff, how did that happen?
Eva: I like any excuse to wear a fancy, slutty costume. I have a hard time keeping my clothes on. By the way, there has been an odd trend

lately at Thee Merry Widows shows for our fans to take their clothes off too. It started in Oakland at an East Bay Rats [motorcycle club] party where a girl took her clothes off onstage and started dry humping me, and then some guy put his tongue up her butthole. All while we were playing! Then last week a certain male psychobilly fan of ours took all his clothes off and go-go danced with us. That was nuts. But please, keep getting naked people! More beer! More flesh! More fucking in the front row! I love it.

MRR: Do you think you girls intimidate boys?
Mandy: I scare some boys, but they love it.
Nikki: I think we definitely scare the shit out of boys.
Nishone: Hell yeah!
Andrea: Yes, I am very frightening. *[everyone laughs]*
Eva: Andrea, you're about as frightening as a fluffy kitty with a pink bow tied around it. As for me, I give any man who has balls enough to deal with my crazy ass full props.
MRR: What are your original songs about?
Andrea: Creepy stuff.
Mandy: Horror, fantasy, domination, and sex.
Nishone: Grave-robbin', man-whippin', zombie-cursin'.
Nikki: Cambodian prostitutes. Just kidding. I just play whatever comes out. Miss Eva makes fun of my "free-form jazz explorations" all the time.
Eva: With titles like "Grave Robbers from Outer Space" and "Cruel Mistress" you can figure it out. Our songs "Talk Shit, Spit Blood" and "Revenge" are about *haters*. And you know who you are. We love campy, reverby monster songs.
MRR: How do you pick songs to cover?
Eva: We learned our Kiss cover for a tribute show that got cancelled at the last minute. And I worship Demented Are Go so we cover a song of theirs.
Nikki: We like to give props to bands that rock!
MRR: Do you think of yourselves as a drunk band?
Mandy: We all drink and occasionally perform drunk.
Eva: I am definitely a drunk singer.
Nishone: I'm not drunk tonight. Our fans though, that's questionable.
Andrea: Miss Eva is.
MRR: Who is the drunkest?
Andrea: Miss Eva von Slut. Yup.
Mandy: Miss Eva.
Nikki: Eva is and always will be. I love her.
Eva: Ha, maybe so but Nishone has been matching me lately drink for drink.
Nishone: Not me!
MRR: What other SF area bands are worth checking out?
Mandy: Vaudevilles, Phenomenauts, Teenage Harlets, Coppertones, eXtreme Elvis, Fracas.
Eva: Flexx Bronco, Whiskey Dick Darryls, Teenage Harlets, Fracas, Bobbyteens, Black Furies, Divinium Diablos, Arno Corps, Los Dryheavers, Fang, Bottles and Skulls, Hellbillys, Plan 9, The Chop Tops, the McCools, Retching Red, Vaudevilles (we love you Jeremy MF Thompson!), and I'd like to plug the Insaints, who I am singing for these days. Oh, and we will be playing with the Formaldabrides soon. RIP the Loudmouths!

Nishone: Carrie Lee and the Saddle-ites, Teenage Harlets, the Vaudevilles, Phenemenauts, Chop Tops, Divinium Diablos, Flexx Bronco.
Nikki: The bands that play at Lucifer's Hammer [weekly metal shows] and Teenage Harlets!
Andrea: Phenomenauts, Teenage Harlets, Rock and Roll Adventure Kids, Del Lames, the Vaudevuilles, Chop Tops.
MRR: What would be your dream show—who would you play with?
Mandy: Adam and the Ants circa 1981.
Nishone: The Dusty 45s.
Nikki: Siouxsie and the Banshees.
Eva: Had you asked me a year ago, I would have said the Misfits and Demented Are Go but we got to play with both those bands this year. So I will now say my dream show is to play with 45 Grave, the Runaways, Danzig, do a duet with Wendy O'Williams… and then Glenn Danzig would give me a foot rub.

MRR: What are your goals/plans?
Andrea: To learn more complete drum fills.
Nishone: Tour everywhere! Have a full-length record. Have hot guys give me guitar lessons.
Mandy: A full-length album with wide distribution and a US tour would be cool.
Eva: I'd like to get our shit together and get a full-length album, and press some goddamned vinyl already! A full USA and European tour. Have a line of anatomically correct Thee Merry Widows action figures. Play a show sober once!
Nikki: My plan is to build a hotrod with George Barris. Also I'd like to build a halfpipe in my backyard.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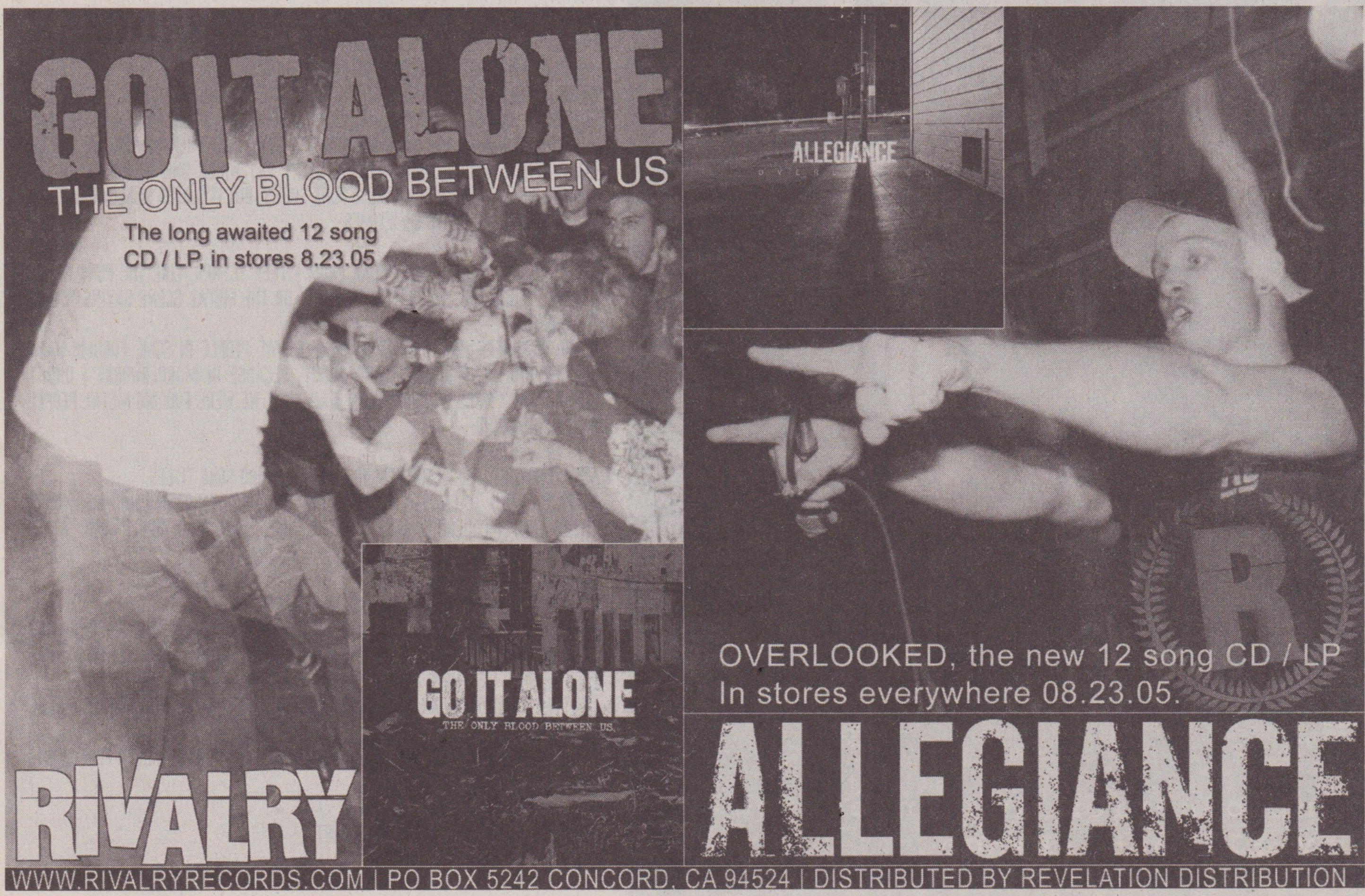
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Vaasa, Finland's **ROTTEN SOUND** has been laying down some of the most devastating go-for-the-throat grind the world has ever seen for about twelve years now. This columnist, at least, can now die a happy man having finally witnessed them live a couple times mid-May on their first West Coast tour (their second US tour overall). We (myself and my DAT-owning compadre Mike) sat down with their singer, Keijo for a couple beers while waiting for the sweltering soup-kitchen-cum-show-space that is the new Balazo Gallery to get warmed up.

Introduction and interview by Elliott Lange

MRR: So how's the jet lag?
KEIJO: Now it's good. We arrived in LA on Wednesday night, and on Thursday we just went out drinking. At that point it was pretty bad. We got drunk reallyfast.

MRR: I've already seen some of the photos that you have on the site. How are you guys updating the site so often? Are you big technically savvy geeks or what?
KEIJO: I'm the geek. I have my laptop with me, and I'm going to some Internet café or using my phone as a modem. I'm trying to do daily updates. It's the only way to get it done. When I come back home, if nothing is written, it's going to be two months of work. I can't do it there, so this way it gets done.

MRR: How long are you over here?
KEIJO: Three weeks with two and a half weeks of playing.

MRR: And this is all set up by Phobia?
KEIJO: No, only the West Coast is set up by Phobia. Misery Index set up the East Coast shows. The original reason to come over again is the Maryland Death Festival.

MRR: Same festival as last year?
KEIJO: Yeah.

MRR. So I guess that means things went well last time?
KEIJO: I think they liked us. They actually had my face on the front page for a while.

MRR: It seems the Swedish grind scene gets a fair amount of publicity. Is there an equivalent Finnish scene or is it just you?
KEIJO: I guess there are a couple of other bands, but they are not really selling as much yet. I think there are more metal/grind bands in Finland and not so many "true" grind bands like us, and even we are kind of crossover. Finnish grind bands just don't get out of the country.

MRR: You seem to be pretty smack in the middle between hardcore and metal—do you see yourself more in one scene than the other? At home do you play more with hardcore or metal bands?
KEIJO: I feel it's a result of the mixture of the members. We have a guitarist and bass player who are hardcore guys and more crusty, and then the drummer and I are more metal guys. And when we mix, we end up being in the middle and I really can't say which one we'd like to be. Sometimes it's fun to play these punk shows, but it's also really fun to go in the big metal fests sometimes.

MRR: Do you ever get any flak from either scenes, like the punk scene saying, "Fuck you, you're too metal," or the metal scene saying you're too punk?
KEIJO: Actually, now with Exit, some metal people in some forums have noticed what I've been writing about, because in Murderworks I didn't include the lyrics on purpose. It was as if we were fooling metal people into liking grind.

MRR: I noticed you also seem to like one-word song titles.
KEIJO: Oh yeah. I almost continued that on Exit, but then I had some good titles that I couldn't make shorter, like "Sell Your Soul" and "Mass Suicide."

MRR: "Western Cancer" is a pretty good one too.
KEIJO: Right. So I just had to keep those. And actually, the message has been always the same. Now when the metal people are noticing what they've been listening to, they are getting upset and...
[Rotten Sound drummer Kai bangs on the bar window and makes faces at us]
KEIJO: So metal people are getting all upset that they've been fooled into this thing.

MRR: Metal people aren't too smart.

KEIJO: YEAH, DUH. WE HAVE A SHIRT DESIGN SAYING "FAST MUSIC FOR SLOW PEOPLE" AND METAL PEOPLE ARE GOING, "OH FUCK, I'M NOT SLOW," BUT...
[OUR SOUND TECHNICIAN] MIKE: I WANT THAT SHIRT!

MRR: SO TELL ME ABOUT WEARING BLOOD ON-STAGE. WAS THAT JUST A ONE-OFF THING WITH MURDERWORKS TO FIT IN WITH THE THEME OF THE ALBUM?
KEIJO: YEAH, THAT'S THE WHOLE IDEA IN MURDERWORKS: DROP THE LYRICS FIRST, THEN PUT BLOOD ON US AND BECOME, I DON'T KNOW, A GORE-GRIND BAND WITH A POLITICAL MESSAGE. SO THE MESSAGE IS HIDING BEHIND THAT. IT WAS SOMETHING WE WANTED TO DO AND IT FELT GREAT. IT WAS COOL FOR THOSE THREE YEARS, BUT IT IS NICE TO BE WITHOUT THE BLOOD NOW.

MRR: THREE YEARS IS A LONG TIME TO DOUSE YOURSELVES IN BLOOD.
KEIJO: YEAH, IT WAS SOMETHING LIKE 150 SHOWS.

MRR: SO WHAT'S BETTER: PIG BLOOD, COW BLOOD, LITTLE BABY BLOOD...
KEIJO: UM, ACTUALLY NO BLOOD IS BEST. WE USED PAINT. ACRYLIC PAINT.

MRR: IS THERE ANY THEME TO THE SHOWS FOR THIS TOUR? ARE YOU ALL GOING TO HAVE SHOTGUNS TO YOUR HEADS LIKE THE EXIT COVER?
KEIJO: WE THOUGHT ABOUT DIFFERENT THINGS AND ENDED UP JUST WEARING BLACK CLOTHING. IT WOULD'VE BEEN GREAT TO INVENT SOMETHING COOL, BUT IT WAS TOO HARD TO CREATE SOMETHING THAT IS EASY TO TAKE WITH YOU. SO...NO, SORRY. OUR THING IS THAT NOW WE'RE TRYING TO LEARN TO PLAY A BIT BETTER.

MRR: HAVE THE FOUR MEMBERS OF THE BAND BEEN THE SAME SINCE [DEBUT FULL-LENGTH] UNDER PRESSURE? I KNOW YOU WERE A FIVE-PIECE BACK THEN. WHAT HAPPENED TO THE SECOND GUITARIST?
KEIJO: OK, IF YOU GO BACK TO THE LINE-UP, IT WAS THE GUITARIST AND I WHO FORMED THE BAND WITH TWO OTHER GUYS, AND THEN THE DRUMMER CAME AFTER THE FIRST EP. FROM THEN ON, FROM 1994, THERE HAVE BEEN THREE OF US—MYSELF, MIKA AND KAI. BUT THE BASS PLAYER HAS BEEN CONSTANTLY CHANGING.

MRR: SO THAT'S YOUR SPINAL TAP GUY?
KEIJO: OR PHOBIA DRUMMER. TONI HAS BEEN IN THE BAND FOR TWO AND A HALF YEARS NOW. I THINK IT'S THE LONGEST TIME FOR ANY BASS PLAYER AND...WE LIKE HIM.

MRR: HE PASSES?
KEIJO: I GUESS. I HOPE HE STAYS ALIVE AND STUFF.

MRR: HE WON'T BLOW UP INTO A PILE OF JELLY?
KEIJO: YOU NEVER KNOW. BUT AS FOR THE OTHER GUITARIST, JUHAV(?) WAS PLAYING ON DRAIN AND STILL PSYCHO. AND HE LEFT TO LIVE IN A DIFFERENT TOWN AND WE FIGURED OUT IT'S TOO HARD TO REHEARSE. HE WENT TO HELSINKI—IT'S QUITE A FEW KILOMETERS FROM VAASA, AND WE FOUND OUT THAT WE DIDN'T REALLY NEED A SECOND GUITARIST. WE JUST HAVE TO MAKE SURE THAT OUR LIVE SOUND SOUNDS BIG ENOUGH.

MRR: I THINK BETWEEN DRAIN AND STILL PSYCHO YOU BECAME MUCH HEAVIER IN THE GUITAR DEPARTMENT. IT SEEMED LIKE ALL OF A SUDDEN, THE GUITAR RIFFS WENT FROM BEING MORE HARDCORE-ORIENTED TO MUCH MORE METAL, EVEN BLACK-METALISH ON STILL PSYCHO.
KEIJO: YEAH, I DON'T KNOW WHAT WAS GOING ON THERE. ACTUALLY, DRAIN WAS KIND OF AN EXPERIMENTAL THING. WE HATE THAT ALBUM.

MRR: YOU'RE CRAZY.
KEIJO: WE REALLY HATE IT. THERE ARE MANY BAD THINGS THERE.

MIKE: REALLY? LIKE WHAT?
KEIJO: UM, BAD VOCALS...

MRR: WELL...YEAH. [CHUCKLES]
KEIJO: RIGHT. WELL, I HAD THE FLU AND TWO DAYS TO DO THE VOCALS—THAT WAS THE EXCUSE.

MRR: I DON'T THINK ANYBODY NOTICED. IT SOUNDED FINE TO ME.
KEIJO: NO, BUT IT WAS REALLY TOO MANY DIFFERENT STYLES PUT TOGETHER, AND IT FAILS TO STAY TOGETHER. WHEN YOU COMPARE DRAIN TO MURDERWORKS, THAT'S THE DIFFERENCE. MURDERWORKS STAYS TOGETHER, AND EVEN UNDER PRESSURE IS MORE LIKE A WHOLE ALBUM.

MRR: I SEE WHAT YOU'RE SAYING. THERE WAS DEFINITELY MORE VARIANCE IN TEMPO WITH DRAIN, BUT—I KNOW THIS SOUNDS LIKE I'M KISSING YOUR ASS—I REALLY THINK IT WORKED WELL AS A WHOLE...BUT MURDERWORKS IS GREAT.
KEIJO: MURDERWORKS IS JUST WHERE WE WANTED TO GO NEXT. AND FOR THE FIRST TIME, WE KNEW WHAT WE WERE DOING. AND I HOPE WE KNOW WHAT WE DID ON EXIT. AT LEAST TODAY, IT FEELS BETTER THAN MURDERWORKS—FOR ME. I DON'T KNOW ABOUT YOU GUYS, BUT WE FEEL IT'S MORE MATURE IN MUSICIANSHIP, IN THE SONGS AND HOW WE PLAY. WE USED TO HAVE A DEATH METAL BAND, WHICH BROKE UP JUST BEFORE DRAIN. I THINK WHAT HAPPENED WAS THAT DURING DRAIN AND STILL PSYCHO, WE TOOK ALL OF THAT DEATH METAL INFLUENCE INTO ROTTEN SOUND, WITHOUT EVEN THINKING ABOUT IT. FINALLY ON MURDERWORKS, WE WERE ABLE TO UNITE EVERYTHING AND GET THE FOCUS RIGHT, BECAUSE WE DIDN'T HAVE TO FOCUS ON TWO THINGS, ON TWO BANDS. SO IT WAS A GOOD THING TO STOP PLAYING VOMITURITION.

MRR: DO YOU HAVE A FAVORITE ROTTEN SOUND ALBUM?
KEIJO: WELL, TODAY I LIKE EXIT. ONE YEAR FROM NOW IT COULD BE MURDERWORKS. IT'S POSSIBLE, BUT I HOPE IT'S EXIT. IT'S HARD TO SAY; EXIT IS TOO NEW FOR ME STILL.

MRR: IS IT FUN TO BE PLAYING THE SONGS LIVE? IS THIS THE FIRST OPPORTUNITY YOU'VE HAD TO TOUR THE SONGS OR HAVE YOU DONE EUROPEAN TOURS AS WELL?
KEIJO: WE'VE DONE SCANDINAVIAN TOURS AND LOTS OF SHOWS IN FINLAND, MAYBE THIRTY SHOWS ALREADY. IT'S BEEN SO FUN TO PLAY EXIT SONGS. THING IS THAT WE DON'T FEEL SO COMFORTABLE PLAYING EVEN MURDERWORKS SONGS ANYMORE BECAUSE THEY ARE NOT SO TIGHT.

MRR: OK, NOW, I HAVE TO ASK MY DRUM-WORSHIPPING QUESTION: WHAT'S IT LIKE TO HAVE THE WORLD'S GREATEST DRUMMER IN YOUR BAND?
KEIJO: I DON'T KNOW IF HE'S THE WORLD'S GREATEST DRUMMER, BUT HE IS GREAT AND HE'S A GOOD GUY. HE'S TAUGHT ALL OF US TO THINK ABOUT MUSICIANSHIP IN THE RIGHT WAY. NONE OF US ARE BLAMING EACH OTHER FOR DOING THINGS WRONG, BUT WE LOOK IN OURSELVES AND THINK HOW WE CAN BECOME BETTER MUSICIANS. AND I THINK THAT THAT'S KAI'S SECRET. HE HAS TAUGHT THAT AT LEAST TO ME. I'VE NOTICED THAT I'VE DEVELOPED FROM DAY ONE—WELL, DRAIN WAS A DIVE, BECAUSE OF THE FLU—BUT I NOTICE THAT I'M DEVELOPING ALL THE TIME. IT FEELS GOOD THAT, EVERY TIME I'M DOING SOMETHING, I'M GETTING BETTER, AND THAT'S WHAT KAI IS ABOUT—HE CAN BRING THE BEST OUT OF EVERY PERSON IN THE BAND. ESPECIALLY IN THE LIVE SITUATION—WHEN YOU PLAY WITH KAI, HE REALLY STARTS TO GET GOING. LIKE ALL MUSICIANS, HE GETS WARMED UP AND AFTER A FEW SONGS YOU CAN REALLY FEEL SOME ENERGY THERE. AND THE WHOLE BAND GETS THE SAME ENERGY TOGETHER SO IT FEELS GREAT. I'VE NEVER HAD IT WITH ANY OTHER DRUMMER.

MRR: YEAH, IT'S GONNA BE HARD FOR YOU TO PLAY WITH ANY OTHER DRUMMER IF, GOD FORBID, YOU BREAK UP.
KEIJO: THAT'S A QUESTION THAT I EVEN WOULDN'T LIKE TO ANSWER. IF KAI LEAVES, MAYBE IT'S ANOTHER BAND THEN. I'D SAY THAT I WOULDN'T STOP PLAYING, BUT MAYBE THE BAND NAME WOULD CHANGE.

MRR: I HAVE A QUESTION RELATED TO A SAD TALE. WERE YOU CLOSE WITH MIESZKO FROM NASUM [WHO DIED IN THE TSUNAMI DISASTER WHILE ON VACATION IN THAILAND]?
KEIJO: OBVIOUSLY. WE SPENT SIX WEEKS AS A WHOLE WITH HIM IN THE STUDIO. WE PLAYED A COUPLE OF SHOWS WITH NASUM, WE MET THEM IN THE FESTIVALS. THEY WERE CLOSE FRIENDS OF OURS. WE WERE IN CONTACT WITH THEM BECAUSE THEY GREW UP IN THE SWEDISH SCENE, THEY JUST GREW UP MUCH BIGGER THAN WE DID, OR, LET'S SAY, MUCH FASTER AT LEAST. THEY WERE REALLY GOOD FRIENDS OF OURS, AND ANDERS AND JON AND URBAN STILL ARE. WE ARE STAYING IN TOUCH OVER EMAIL, BUT IT'S DAMN HARD TO TALK TO THEM ABOUT MIESZKO. IT'S HARD TO THINK ABOUT MIESZKO NOT BEING HERE ANYMORE. WE HAVE HAD LOTS OF HARD TIMES THINKING, WHERE THE FUCK ARE WE GOING TO RECORD NEXT TIME? WE DID TWO RECORDS THERE, BUT SOMEHOW WE FELT WE SHOULD DO ONE MORE WHEN WE LEFT DOING EXIT THERE. BUT WE MISS THE GUY, AND IT WAS A GREAT LOSS TO THE WHOLE GRINDCORE SCENE. HE HAS BEEN PRODUCING SHITLOADS OF GREAT ALBUMS.

MRR: AND PLAYING ON AND WRITING SOME OF THE BEST MUSIC IN THE GENRE, REALLY.
KEIJO: AND NOT JUST NASUM, ALSO GENOCIDE SS. JUST LISTENED TO IT TODAY AND IT'S GREAT PARTY MUSIC...I DON'T KNOW. THESE THINGS MAY HAPPEN. IT JUST REMINDS US HOW FRAGILE WE ARE. ANYTHING CAN HAPPEN.

MRR: IT WAS A PRETTY SURREAL THING. OK WELL, I KNOW YOU'RE IN A HURRY SO WE'LL TRY TO WRAP THIS UP. DO YOU HAVE ANYTHING YOU'RE LOOKING FORWARD TO SPECIFICALLY, ON THIS TOUR HERE ON THE WEST COAST?

KEIJO: ACTUALLY I WAS LOOKING FORWARD TO THESE WAREHOUSE SHOWS, LIKE WHAT WE HAVE TODAY. THEY CAN BE THE BEST ONES SOMETIMES. IF YOU CAN GET THE AUDIENCE GOING THERE WITHOUT HURTING THEMSELVES, IT CAN GET REALLY NICE. ITÍS A NICE PLACE TO START FROM AND COME BACK TO.

MRR: HAVE YOU NOTICED ANY DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND EUROPEAN GRINDCORE SCENES?
KEIJO: UM, NOT REALLY. IT'S A STRANGE THING. THE US IS SO DIFFERENT FROM EUROPE, THAT'S OBVIOUS. IT'S...AH FUCK, THEY ARE JUST DIFFERENT WORLDS. BUT WHEN WE GET TO THE VENUES AND WHEN WE GET TO THE CLUBS, IT'S THE SAME KIND OF PEOPLE WHO COME TALK TO US OR WHOM WE PLAY TO, AND THE SAME KIND OF PEOPLE ARE PLAYING IN THE BANDS. SO IT SEEMS THE UNDERGROUND SCENE IS MORE A GLOBAL MOVEMENT; WE ARE NOT AFFECTED BY GOVERNMENTS' STUPIDITY. THERE'S LOTS OF STUPIDITY IN THE EUROPEAN GOVERNMENTS AS WELL, SO I'M NOT BLAMING YOU GUYS OR ANYTHING.

MRR: THAT'S USUALLY THE KIND OF RESPONSE I GET WHEN I TALK TO PEOPLE FROM OTHER COUNTRIES. OBVIOUSLY, THE PEOPLE INTERVIEWING YOU FOR MRR, WE DIDN'T VOTE FOR BUSH. SO WE'RE PROBABLY ALL ON THE SAME POLITICAL PAGE.
KEIJO: I DON'T KNOW IF I SHOULD HAVE ANY STRONG COMMENTS ABOUT BUSH OR YOUR VOTING, IT'S YOUR THING. I MAY BE WRITING SOMETHING IN MY ALBUMS BUT...[WE ALL LAUGH]

MRR: YEAH, WHAT'S THAT WHOLE "WESTERN CANCER" THING THEN?
KEIJO: BUT THAT'S LIKE THE WHOLE WESTERN WORLD, NOT JUST US. OK, I GUESS THE MOST AGGRESSIVE STUFF IS IN THE SONG ÌV.S.A.,Î IF YOU READ IT WRONG. BUT IF YOU READ IT RIGHT, ITÍS ANTI-VIOLENCE. AND I'M TALKING ABOUT HOW THE WARS ARE FEEDING THE TERRORISTS. IT'S NOT JUST THE US—THE RUSSIANS ARE DOING THE SAME THING. IT COULD BE "VIOLENT STATES OF RUSSIA," BUT THAT DOESN'T SOUND AS GOOD AS "V.S.A." [MORE LAUGHTER]. BUT RUSSIA AND CHECHNYA IS EXACTLY THE SAME THING AS US AND IRAQ. IT'S ONE TO ONE, AND BOTH PLACES ARE SEEING BAD THINGS LIKE BOMBINGS HAPPENING. WHY DON'T THE GOVERNMENTS NOTICE THAT WHEN THEY ATTACK SOMEONE, THEY WILL BE COUNTERATTACKED? YOU CAN'T FIGHT FIRE WITH FIRE.

MRR: YEAH. WE'RE NOT THE ONES MAKING THE DECISIONS, ARE WE?
KEIJO: NO. AND AGAIN, IT'S NOT SOMETHING THAT I CAN SAY TO THE GOVERNMENT, BUT IT'S VERY FRUSTRATING TO BE AN OUTSIDER, LIVING IN SCANDINAVIA—IN THIS NEUTRAL ZONE—AND THEN WE TRAVEL ALL OVER THE WORLD AND HAVE TO BE AFRAID: "OK, NOW THIS PLANE CAN BLOW UP." I ACTUALLY WROTE "V.S.A." WHEN I WAS FLYING FROM FINLAND TO DALLAS.

MRR: THAT MUST HAVE BEEN A DIFFERENT PLANET FOR YOU GUYS. MY FAMILY'S FROM THERE—IT'S A STRANGE PLACE.
KEIJO: NO, I WAS FLYING, I WAS ON THE PLANE WHEN I WROTE IT. I THINK I WAS HAVING LOTS OF GIN AND TONICS AND STUPID THOUGHTS, SO I HAD TO GET IT OUT OF ME. I HAD MY LAPTOP WITH ME AND THERE IT WENT.

MRR: YOU KNOW, I'VE NOTICED THAT YOU MENTION GIN AND TONIC QUITE A BIT ON THE SITE SO FAR—FAVORITE DRINK?
KEIJO: DEFINITELY.

MRR: THAT'S ONE OF THE FEW THINGS THAT MY FATHER AND I HAVE IN COMMON: GIN AND TONIC.
KEIJO: WE DON'T DRINK THEM TOO MUCH ON THE GROUND, BUT ALWAYS ON OUR FLIGHTS.

MRR: BETTER AT HIGHER ALTITUDES, RIGHT?
KEIJO: YES, SOMEHOW THEY TASTE BEST WHEN YOU FLY.

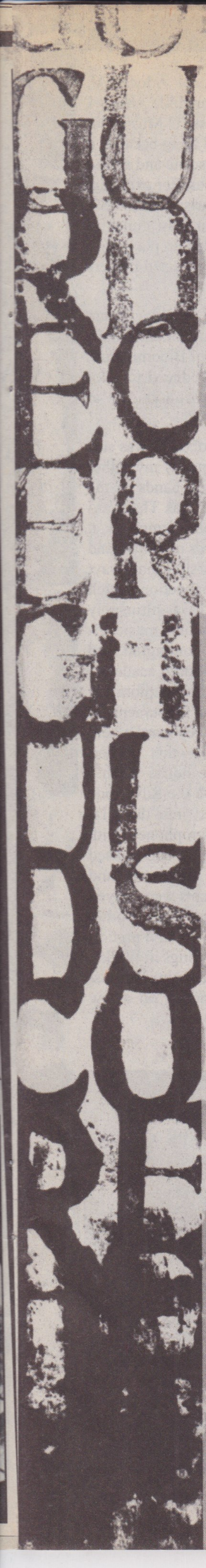
MRR: SAGE ADVICE.
KEIJO: YOU CAN GET LIKE FIVE CENTILITERS AND IT'S ALMOST 50 PROOF. ON DOMESTIC FLIGHTS IN THE US, YOU BUY GIN AND YOU GET A BIG CAN OF TONIC; YOU CAN MAKE TWO DRINKS OUT OF IT.

MRR: NOT BAD. OK, ONE LAST QUESTION. THERE WAS A BRILLIANT INTERVIEW IN MRR A WHILE AGO WITH THE BAND I QUIT!, AND I'M GOING TO STEAL ONE OF THE QUESTIONS FROM THAT: IF YOUR BAND COULD BE REPRESENTED BY ONE ANIMAL, WHAT WOULD IT BE?
KEIJO: UH, SOMETHING LIKE RHINOS ON SPEED.

MRR: RHINOS ON SPEED. GOTTA HAVE THE AMPHETAMINES INVOLVED?
KEIJO: I GUESS SO.

MRR: THAT MAKES SENSE. ALRIGHT, THANKS FOR TALKING WITH US. GOOD LUCK WITH THE SHOWS, AND I HOPE YOU DON'T LOCK YOUR KEYS IN YOUR VAN ANYMORE.
KEIJO: OH SHIT, IT'S LIKE TWO TIMES TODAY, THREE TIMES TOMORROW.

MRR: SO YOU'RE CALLING THE TOUR THE "AAA TOUR?"
KEIJO: MOST LIKELY, YEAH.



THE GULCHER RECORDS STORY PART I

AMONGST THE ROWS OF CORN AND THE CONSERVATIVE VALUES, THERE WASN'T TOO MUCH CULTURE OR ANYTHING EXCITING, REALLY, OF WHICH TO SPEAK IN BLOOMINGTON, INDIANA IN THE EARLY '70'S, AND NOTHING FEEDS THE IMAGINATION LIKE EMPTINESS. BOB RICHERT'S GULCHER RECORDS WAS FORMED IN THE MID-1970'S WITH A PASSION FOR MUSIC AND A SIMPLE THOUGHT, "WHY NOT?" MANY OF THE BANDS HE ADDED TO HIS ROSTER SPRUNG FROM THE SAME QUESTION.

Edited by Jill Hubley

Bob Richert: I grew up in Upstate New York, near Buffalo, and arrived in Bloomington in September 1970 to attend grad school in geology—just to think I almost opted to attend the University of Buffalo instead! I gradually found myself spending more time spinning rock music at WIUS, the campus radio station, than studying rocks. By 1973, I'd discovered the rock fanzine scene and had started my own, a precursor to Gulcher magazine.

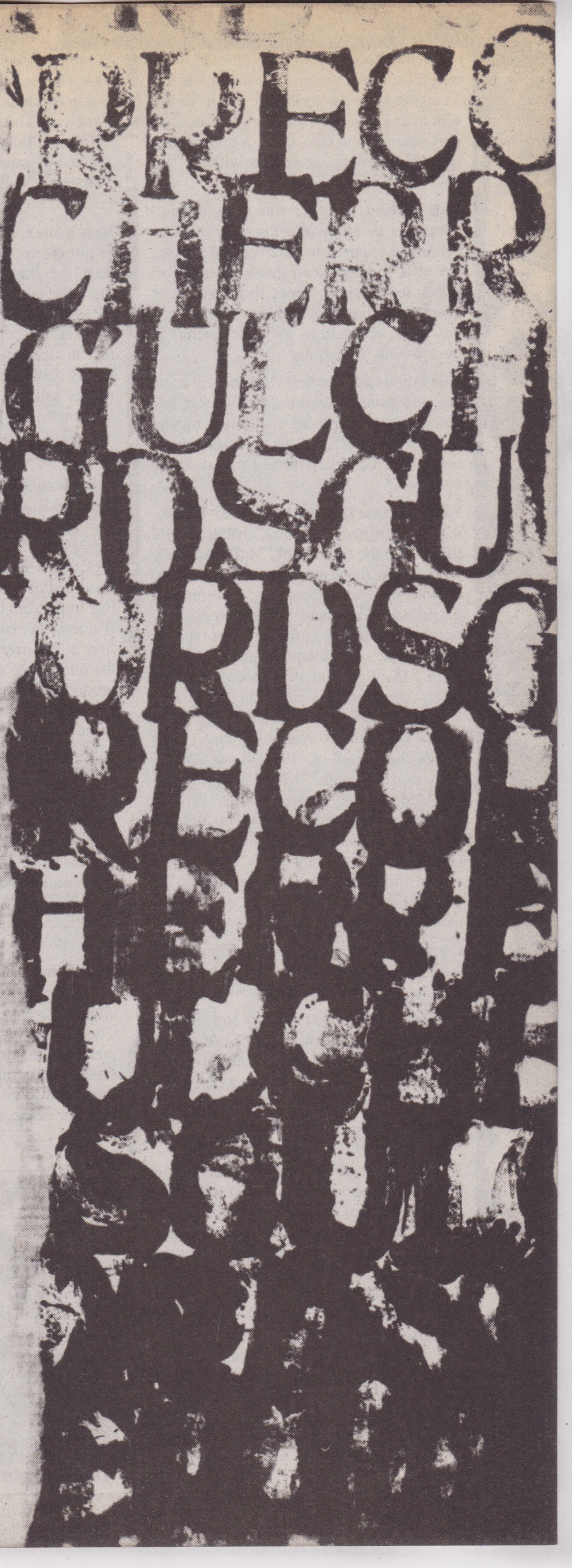
Eddie Flowers: In 1973, I received a copy of Bob Richert's first zine, Beyond Our Control. We corresponded, and I wrote quite a bit for BOC.

Bob Richert: [Eddie] put together the first issue of Gulcher, with articles and reviews by several well-known rock writers (Richard Meltzer, Lester Bangs, Metal Mike Saunders, Cub Koda). Zines were also where I connected with Ken "Gizmo" Highland, ironically from Brockport, New York. I'd graduated from Brockport State in 1970, but never knew Ken the two years I was there—we went to different schools together.

Ken Highland: I was doing a fanzine called Rock On! in high school, which would have been 1972. I graduated in 1974. I think it was Greg Shaw who listed it in a column in Crawdaddy. I heard from a whole mess of people, and one of them was Bob "Mr. Bear" Richert, who later started Gulcher magazine and Gulcher Records.*

Ted Niemiec: I noticed Gulcher fanzine right away. It was bold and different, and I got in touch with the editor, Bob, who had a lot of diverse musical interests. He introduced me to Kenne [Highland], who also had a great deal of musical ideas. We talked and did a little jam session in a dorm room, and were convinced that the Gizmos would be great. The first song that Kenne, Cliff and I wrote together would ultimately blow everyone away.

Bill McCarter: I met Bob when I showed up at Editype (where he worked) to buy the first Gizmos EP. I worked part time at Gulcher magazine as a proofreader and photographer. The first picture I had published was of Rich Stim in an ad for Gulcher. Some cool things I remember about Gulcher



magazine: Gene Simmons was a subscriber, Thurston Moore (way before Sonic Youth) sent in a very early "New York Witness" report column, and Cub Koda, a great writer, started his writing career there with the "Vinyl Junkie" column.

Bob Richert: Gulcher was a logical outgrowth of being involved in college radio, becoming exposed to fanzines and starting my own, then realizing that having a label rather than writing about them would be even cooler. Everything was very spontaneous in the beginning—we were clueless in our certainty of purpose.

Ken Highland: The first Dictators LP came out, and I started working for Gulcher. Me and fellow teenager Eddie Flowers figured if Andy Shernoff and the gang could become fanzine-writers-turned-rockstars, so could we.*

Eddie Flowers: I made trips to Bloomington from my home in Alabama several times from the summer of '74 till early '77. At the time, the scene there had nothing to do with what we were doing. Bloomington music was dominated by bad hippie music, fake bluegrass, and white jazz—pretty awful. The only kindred spirits in town were MX-80 Sound. I've been into rock music since I was a little kid in the 60s. I started writing for fanzines at age 14 in 1971. That led to everything else. Long before the deluge of 1977, I was already immersed in "punk": MC5, Stooges, Velvet Underground, Lester Bangs, Richard Meltzer, Creem magazine and fanzines, the Dictators, Brownsville Station, the Flamin' Groovies, pro wrestling on TV, cheeseburgers, sniffing airplane glue, the Sonics, the Shadows of Knight, the Troggs, early heavy metal, rockabilly, etc., etc.

I was a teenager searching for something. All I really knew was that I liked rock music a lot, and wanted to be involved.

Phil Hundley: I was born in Noblesville, IN, about 25 miles north-northeast of Indianapolis and grew up in Carmel, about 10 miles due north of Indy. It was a tiny place when I was a small kid (60s – early 70s) that grew into an enormous, and modestly wealthy, suburb of Indy in the mid-70s.

Around that time ('74 – '75) a couple of friends and I became avid Rock Scene readers because they so often wrote about Kiss and the NY Dolls, and we started seeing pictures of these hysterically funny-looking guys called the Ramones. See if you can find the issue with "Takin' a Subway Ride with the Ramones." Had no clue as to what on Earth they might sound like, but eventually we read that they were going to put an album out. My friend Tony and I immediately began pestering the local record store to order copies of it as soon as it became available. Bought it the day it was released, took it home, put it on, mouth dropped open and quite frankly, it changed the world as I knew it. Then all kinds of other records followed: Talking Heads, Pistols, Clash, Television, especially Television, Ultravox, Vibrators. Could never listen to Uriah Heep the same way again, you know?

Ken Kaiser: Prior to 1977 I was attracted to groups such as Alice Cooper, Kiss, and then the Ramones. I liked wild, weird, loud, fast stuff. I bought the Ramones' first LP almost as soon as it came out and was shocked that the songs were so short and had no lead guitar. Even though I could hardly play the guitar at all I could play Ramones songs. I was psyched about that. I could not play along on guitar to songs by any other groups—except "Ear Ache My Eye" by Cheech and Chong.

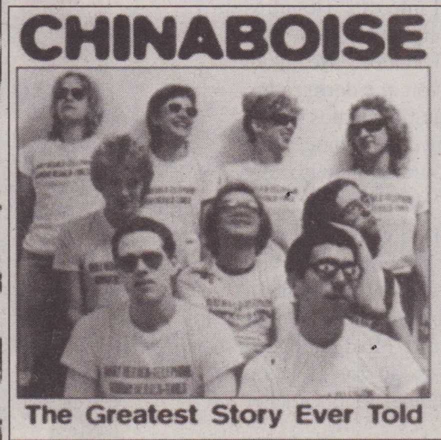
Ted Niemiec: In 1975 there was some live music in Bloomington, but it was primarily undesirable in a bad way. One would ordinarily hear nothing but the drunken boogie rock bands that were revered by the mindless mediocre masses. It was technically live music, but to me it sounded dead. Now if one searched very carefully, one could find a few treasures. I was immersed in the alternative and avant-garde and underground before punk music emerged, and I was dedicated to producing some treasures myself along the way.

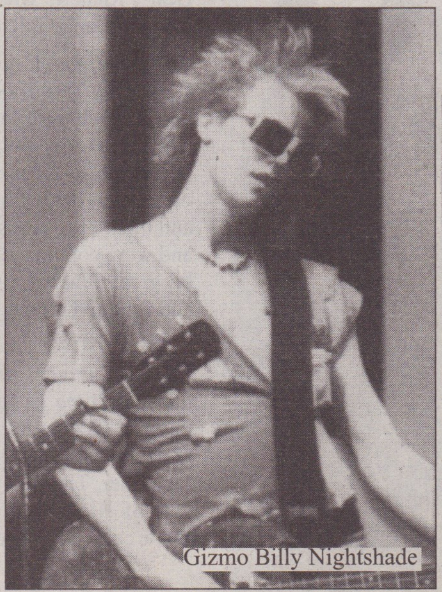
Bob Richert: All the other Midwestern cities and college towns had handfuls of groups which had released records, but beyond the Bloomington-Indianapolis-West Lafayette corridor, interaction was relatively sporadic. Plus most everyone was still awed by the stuff coming out of New York and London, though Hoosier hysteria seemed to manage to surface no matter how many Ramones or Sex Pistols records you owned.

Rich Stim: The art and music scene was very progressive and multi-spectrum. You could hear any kind of music at that time. There was a lot of prog rock, art rock, free jazz, and tons of cool Midwest rock. Nationally the country was in a very sucky music way—pop radio really sucked (except for some of the disco stuff). But in town, even the radio was cool. A local DJ, Mike Bourne, had an incredible show. I think having the world class IU Music Department was a really good thing because it opened up the local music scene and mixed student types with DIY types. For example, Bruce Anderson, the guitarist for MX-80, basically taught himself to play guitar in Oolitic, Indiana but he ended up playing in local bands with classically trained players like Michael Gribbroek.

Scott Wooldridge: I (and Brian [Wooldridge]) grew up near Kokomo, Indiana, about two hours north of Bloomington. I met Bob R. and was introduced to a lot of music by him while I was a student at Indiana University.

Ted Niemiec: In early childhood I was surrounded by many musicians, as my father played drums in some good bands in the Chicago area. One of them was The Wanderers, which included Robert Lamm, a.k.a. Bobby Charles, on keyboards until the band Chicago discovered him and stole him away; another was The Rotary Connection, which featured Minnie Riperton. I was ultimately involved in some experimental music efforts prior to arriving in Bloomington, and upon reaching the Willkie South academic unit I began to record some exploratory tapes including improvised instruments. I still have the Silvertone keyboard—held together with paper clips—that Robert Lamm used to play at the house when I was in grade school, I have the Silvertone guitar that I later modified into the Gizmotone, I have the old microphone—with wires held together with tape—and bruised sax that were used by The Wanderers, and so on. Some of the instruments were played underwater, and many were used in other creative ways. One of the guys who participated in some of these recordings in Willkie South was Cliff Wolff, a cunning linguist who later collaborated lyrically on a few Gizmos tunes.



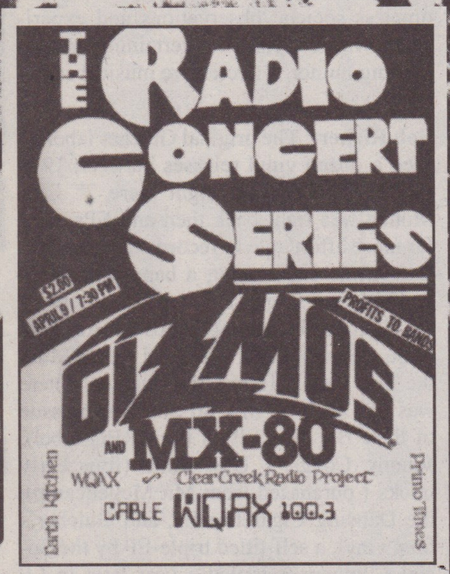

Gizmo Billy Nightshade

Rich Stim: The Midwest was a series of connected pockets—Cincinnati, Detroit, Ann Arbor, Chicago, Bloomington, Carbondale—places like that had a lot of weird music stuff starting to happen. We corresponded with a few of those nutcakes and they got in touch with us. And lots of cutting edge and weird acts—Captain Beefheart, Sun Ra, Zappa, Mahavishnu Orchestra—came through town. So we were separated, but whatever insularity there was, it was a good thing.

Bob Richert: Growing up listening to 60s radio gave me very eclectic tastes. Music wasn't all fragmented/hyphenated back then, and I think Gulcher's willingness to release a variety of bands is a reflection of that openness.

David Keenan: To me, Gulcher is totally coherent, the kinda label you can rely on to hit the spot no matter what genre you wanna dig into.

Bob Richert: From the beginning the plan was to have a label with lots of bands, and Bloomington has always been a locale full of creativity.



Rich Stim: [Bob] offered to put out an EP of MX-80 at some point. He had a written contract. I have it somewhere. That was impressive though it had a few holes in it. I was impressed with Bob because he could do the numbers and come out ahead.

Bob Richert: Our third rélease was a reissue of MX-80 Sound's Big Hits—Hard Pop From The Hoosiers EP. The original pressing had sold out and the BRBQ imprint was inactive by then, so we whipped up a new picture sleeve and insert, and propelled MX-80 onto Island Records (UK).

Ken Kaiser: I only knew of Bob Richert as the manger of the Gizmos. He seemed to be quite a businessman to us. He knew about publishing and copyright and all that stuff.

Bob Richert: Gulcher actually came from Bloomington's nickname of "The Gulch." Many people have assumed it was named after Richard Meltzer's book, particularly since Meltzer wrote for the first issue of Gulcher (#0), and penned the liner notes for the first three Gizmos EPs.

Eddie Flowers: I've never felt like I was part of any widespread movement. Things are creative and fresh for very short periods of time, and movements almost always kill off what's real. To me, punk rock was already old in 1977. I liked the Sex Pistols, the Ramones, etc., but I thought they were all inferior to the MC5, the Stooges, and the Velvet Underground. As for the Gizmos and Gulcher, we were connected to a very loose-knit network of fanzines and record labels around the world, but this didn't translate into anything on the local level.

Ken Kaiser: It was insular enough in New Jersey. I can't imagine what it was like in Indiana! I was just out of high school and lived in New Jersey with my parents. There was almost no scene in NJ. There was a rock scene. People did go to clubs and listen to live music but the band would usually be some kind of cover band doing Led Zeppelin, Doors, etc. Disco was huge too. In 1976, the scene was broken into two factions, those who listened to Zeppelin and those who listened to disco.

The Gizmos

Billy Nightshade: When I arrived In Indiana in the fall of 1977, there was no music scene in Bloomington, just a bunch of shit piled around in different places. I was enrolled in the MBA program at IU (where my advisor, Mr. Tuttle, once told me that I was "like an orange in a barrel full of apples" amongst my "fellow" MBAs), staying in Eigennman Hall, the graduate student dormitory, and listening to "The Idiot" by Iggy Pop incessantly that fall. I made friends with a fellow graduate student from Berlin, named Hans, who introduced me to another from Hamburg named Andreas.

I had just been playing with northern Minnesota's only punk band that summer, Terminal Intensity, with my brother, Mark, and our nearest neighbor, Alan. Alan lived on a farm a mile from us. I mean, we were in the boonies. We were a hell of a lot better than a lotta bands, i.e. Boston, who were pretty big at the time, but I had no intention or concept of playing in a band when I got to Bloomington. I did have my bass and a small amp with me strictly for personal entertainment, or so I thought. How could there be punk rock in a place like Bloomington, Indiana?

Scott Wooldridge: I had gone to IU to study journalism. I enjoyed journalism, but my real passion was music. (Things are pretty much the same 25 years later.) I was dying to be in a band, even though I couldn't play guitar and couldn't really sing at the time. I could play a little bit of keys and I could make my voice sound snarly enough to fake my way as a lead singer (these were the days of punk, after all). So I kind of asserted myself as lead singer of the group of guys I was jamming with, which included my brother and two other neighbor kids. We all lived within a quarter mile of each other. After Bob agreed to put our track on Red Snerts, we decided it was imperative to drop out of school and become rock stars. Our parents were really thrilled with this decision, needless to say. After a year or two of wasting time in Indiana, we decided to get really serious and moved to Milwaukee. I have no explanation for this, other than to say it seemed like a good idea at the time. But I can say that we were very serious about music and did want to go as far as we could in the music business.

Ted Niemiec: I felt we were pioneering as part of a worldwide movement held together a bit loosely, with a lot of freedom to create within a wide field. At the same time, few people in Indiana were ready yet.

Bill McCarter: I grew up in Vincennes,

Indiana. One of my best friends as a kid was Pat Todd (The Lazy Cowgirls, Pat Todd & The Rankoutsiders) and he is one of the most enthusiastic music fans I have ever known. Without a record released or a name, it was almost impossible to perform original songs in our part of the country in the '70s. About the only venues were bars and the clientele liked cover bands to do the hits of the day. This is the reason MX-80 played the library. It was a joy to see an MX-80 flyer (they made some of the best) announcing a show.

John Barge: I cannot emphasize enough how few people had ever heard this stuff, though they had heard of it.

Bill McCarter: Pat and I experimented with original songs with no place to play. It was our love of the music and a creative drive that made us make demos and practice trying to do something. The guys I've played with and recorded with have the same love of music and the need to create that hits you from time to time.

Billy Nightshade: We were part of no movement in conservative, insular Indiana and none of us ever felt that way. We were lone wolves, but I was used to that feeling from my band days back home outside Pelican Rapids. I never expected nor desired for people to like us. I expected and accepted rejection. I liked rebellion. It was all part of being in a punk band for me. The important thing to me was the charge I got just playing music that I loved.

Ken Kaiser: At the end of 1977, the Afrika Korps fired our other guitar player, Solomon Gruberger. I took out a small ad in the Bergen Record that read something like, "Punk band seeks guitarist..." People in New Jersey just freaked out! I got all these calls from people who just shouted into the phone, "Punk rock sucks! Fuck you!" and then hung up. Sometimes my mother answered the phone for those calls and she dutifully took down the message for me to read when I got home. People couldn't handle it. One guy called who said he was the former drummer for the Music Machine, a 60's band that had a hit with a song called "Talk Talk." He just wanted to clue me in about how much punk rock sucked. We talked for about an hour. He wasn't being mean or confrontational, he just thought I should hear from someone who knew something that punk rock really did suck. Also, Miriam Linna and maybe Lydia Lunch called to chat about what I was trying to do. They were from Manhattan and were happy that punk was spreading to New Jersey. The scene was so small back then that if someone saw an ad for a punk rock band they would just call up to talk about it.

John Barge: I was crazy about punk rock and thought it was the most important movement of the time. I was a zealot. I was also damn near alone in my high school in that regard! I used to write lyrics on the chalkboard of my classes, and carry around a notebook with pictures on it, and try to convert people to the "cause."

Ken Kaiser: I had this naive belief that punk was going to change the whole music industry. Bands would no longer be judged just by their "talent" but would be judged much more on their "sincerity." I was hoping that would be the case because I knew I had sincerity. I don't think anyone was expecting to make any money and become famous. We just wanted to make music that was similar to the music we liked. That's what punk meant to us.

Bob Richert: Bloomington was coolest of course in the beginning. It was only in my last couple years there (1980-81) when anything approximating a scene started to

develop, and critical mass wasn't reached until both myself and the Gizmos had departed for Hoboken.

Scott Wooldridge: I think in general we felt there was a big change going on in music and that a lot of great bands were out there and we wanted to be one of them. However, in our small part of the world, Bloomington, Kokomo, even Indianapolis, it seemed that we were definitely outsiders. Since I dropped out of IU, we were stuck in Kokomo, with occasional gigs in Indianapolis, and college towns like Bloomington and West Lafayette. So in Kokomo there was only one other band that was even close to what we were doing, a band called the 11th Hour, which played some good originals and a lot of Kinks. When there are only two bands in town, that's about as insular as you can get. I think one of the things that appealed to us about Milwaukee was that it wasn't too overwhelming as a big city, yet there were obviously a lot of bands and clubs. The Violent Femmes had just become big, so we thought, "Hey, this is a lot better than Indiana!" The one cool club in Indianapolis that I remember, Crazy Al's, lasted about six months. Other than that, we were playing pizza places and video game rooms. We were paid with free games.

John Barge: [There were] no other labels that I knew of. Gulcher was ahead of its time in that regard. Though bands like the Gynecologists and Dow Jones also did their own labels. Unfortunately, I would have to say camaraderie was a rare factor, though we all knew we were doing something out of the mainstream. Still, punk back then put a very high premium on confrontation, insults, and the like.

Rich Stim: BRBQ Records existed. But there was no camaraderie. They were trying to compete in the big leagues.

Eddie Flowers: No scene, no labels. The punk scene didn't happen in Bloomington until the early 80s, by which time I was living in L.A. and hanging out with the Angry Samoans.

Ted Niemiec: Besides Gulcher Records, there were a few other labels such as BRBQ Records. The more creative groups enjoyed a camaraderie, although there was some hostility from others. Sure, a few people hated us and threatened us, and a few times we had to unplug, but it was mostly good. The Gizmos openly explored and expressed timeless societal observations and experiences with a blend of entertaining energy, probing humor, and creative musical sensibility.

Bob Richert: The original Gulcher label issued a dozen vinyl releases between 1976 and 1981, of which eight were 7" EPs. Money was tight back then and EPs were far more affordable to record and manufacture, while showcasing a band with more depth than a single. Four of these were by the Gizmos: the debut Gizmos EP, Amerika First, Gizmos World Tour, and Never Mind the Sex Pistols Here's the Gizmos. There was one each by MX-80 Sound (a reissue of their Big Hits EP on the BRBQ label), Johnny Cougar's U.S. Male (four early tracks I purchased from Mr. Mellencamp), the Dancing Cigarettes EP, and Gulcher's final vinyl, a self-titled triple-EP by the Social Climbers (reissued a year later in LP format as the sole release from my Hoboken Records label).

Mach Bell: As a recording artist I was quickly introduced to the underground world of rock fanzines, college radio, writers & reviewers. It didn't take me long to come across the Gulcher name. I mail ordered the Gizmos "Muff Divin'" single. I had read a whole lot about that one.

Bob Richert: Gulcher also released 7" maxi-singles by the Panics and the Jetsons, the split Hooiser Hysteria album by the Gizmos and Dow Jones & the Industrials, and the 16-band Red Snerts compilation LP.

My involvement with the various groups ran the gauntlet from the Gizmos where I was very involved in everything, to MX-80's Big Hits EP which was a reissue with new Gulcher packaging, to the Dancing Cigarettes who handed me a completed

Red Glance

package.

The original Gizmos were never a real band that lived in the same town, rehearsed regularly, and played gigs. The rock writers and musicians who recorded the first three Gizmos EPs began meeting through the rock fanzine underground circa 1973, descended on Bloomington in March 1976 to record the debut Gizmos EP, then returned a year later for follow-up sessions and even a couple live shows with MX-80 sound.

Ken Highland: Bob Richert formed the [Gizmos] around me, cuz he'd heard some high school tapes and said my singing had a swamp sound.*

Bob Richert: After the April 1977 sessions, Ted Niemiec wanted to put together a working band of Gizmos—the first EP was an underground hit and the punk rock wave was approaching Indiana. We ran some classified ads and recruited the line-up featured on the 1978 EP Never Mind the Sex Pistols Here's the Gizmos. Then Ted realized the impossibility of being both a rock star and a doctor, but with a new EP to support and gigs to be played, the remaining core of Dale Lawrence, Billy Nightshade, and Shadow Myers were joined by Tim Carroll as the 1979-1980 Hoosier Hysteria Gizmos. There were a few discussions about renaming the group, but it all seemed reasonably seamless at the time, which I feel is reflected in the progression of the music.

Dale Lawrence: Basically, they were looking to put together a version of the Gizmos they could take on the road. I told them it wasn't exactly what I had in mind, but that I'd give it a shot. They made sure I could strum an E chord, told me I was hired, and left me copies of the band's three EPs.*

Phil Hundley: When I was a junior in high school, I saw an ad in the local music paper (Radio Free Rock) that some band in Bloomington called the Gizmos was looking for a drummer. I had never heard of them—knew nothing about them. "Punk" really didn't mean anything much to me, still. It wouldn't have attracted or dissuaded me. I wanted to play in a band and play live. This sounded like that might happen. Since I now had a driver's license, I figured I could drive down for practices (Bloomington is about 45 or so miles south of Indy), so I called up and spoke with Bob Richert for the first time and got an audition.

Prior to the Gizmos, I had played drums and done some singing with a couple of junior high bands—playing the sort of mid-70s junk the guitar players liked, Doobie Brothers, Deep Purple, and so forth. Regardless of the pressure, I refused to sing "Free Bird" under any circumstances, and at that time and place, that kinda made me suspect, so I was all ready for punk.

Billy Nightshade: One day that October, Andreas told me that he had met a manager of a local punk band with three EPs behind it that needed new members, including a bass player. A few nights later, I auditioned for the band with Bob Richert (said manager), Ted Niemic (the singer) and Dale Lawrence (a new guitar player) being present. Bob gave me the three EPs and I was so impressed that they had vinyl out already and was very keen on the idea of being on a record. Way cool.

I had no aspirations, beyond playing in a band that was going to rock like mofo's and put out more vinyl.

Phil Hundley: I was the Gizmos drummer for about two weeks, then Shadow Myers auditioned and moved me off to one side, where I sang backup vocals (lead on a song or two), played some percussion and became a sort of poor-man's very young Handsome Dick Manitoba. Dale Lawrence's liner notes to the most recent Gizmos disc on Gulcher pretty much sum it up.

Dale Lawrence: Over the next couple of months, the "new" Gizmos lineup came together: Ted and me; Billy Nightshade on bass; Shadow on drums; Steve Feikes, the closest thing we had to a lead guitarist; and Phil Hundley, an Indianapolis teenager, who had originally auditioned to be the drummer, but who was kept in the lineup (Bob explained) because it would look funny (and thus be in keeping with the original Gizmos aesthetic) to have a fat high school kid on stage playing tambourine.*

Phil Hundley: I had a great time for a while, but it quickly became clear that the band was becoming Dale's (and for the better, mind you) and there was little need for a poor-man's very young Handsome Dick Manitoba, so I quit.

Besides which, I was frankly interested in doing something a little more fulfilling myself. I kicked around trying to put together bands for a couple of years with little success, then started playing regularly with an old friend, Michael Woods, and we put Red Glance together with Roger Baker and Andy Smith in early '82. Found them both through another ad in Radio Free Rock.

Ken Kaiser: In February 1977 a friend of mine named Donal Buckley (no "d" on the end of Donal) was serving in the U. S. Marine Corps. He introduced me to fellow Marine, Kenne Highland who was perhaps the biggest star in the Gizmos. The Gizmos first EP had come out and had been reviewed in Creem Magazine. I was very impressed. Being on a record and getting reviewed in a magazine was nothing but a pipe dream for me up until then.

Richard Meltzer: Ken is now PFC Ken of the fabulous US Marine Corpse (eat yer hearts out, USN!), stationed at Ft. Meade, MD. Should war break out in the hinterland of Quebec (I mean there's no telling what those commie frogs'll think of next), Ken will be our man of the hour with grenade launchers and bazooka ever at the ready.*

Ken Kaiser: Kenne and I jammed one weekend when he was on leave and Kenne asked me if Donal and I wanted to come to the studio with him to add backing tracks to an album he was recording with a different group, the Afrika Korps. I didn't know what an "Afrika Korps" was, but I jumped at the chance to be on an actual record. I really couldn't believe it! I thought you had to go to Julliard for 10 years before you could get in the front door of a recording studio.

The Afrika Korps was recording in Virginia two weeks after that and they didn't have a drummer. They asked if I would play drums (and drive them to Virginia). Once again, I jumped at the chance. We had absolutely no money so five of us slept on the floor of a room Kim Kane's parents house. (Kim was the founder of the Washington DC punk band The Slickee Boys.) We couldn't even afford food and the bass player had to fight Kim Kane's dog for the last of the dog food.

...to be continued next issue.

Cast:

John Barge: Panics, Walking Ruins
Mach Bell: Mach 5, Thundertrain
Eddie Flowers: Beyond Our Control fanzine, Gulcher Fanzine, Gizmos, Crawlspace
Ken Highland: Rock On! fanzine, Gulcher fanzine, Gizmos, Afrika Korps, The Korps
Phil Hundley: Gizmos, Red Glance
Dave Keenan: Volcanic Tongue
Ken Kaiser: Afrika Korps, The Korps, X-Ray Tango, Kleen Kut Records
Dale Lawrence: Gizmos
Bill McCarter: Bill McCarter + Stalingrad Symphony, Gulcher photographer
Richard Meltzer: rock critic
Ted Niemiec: Gizmos
Billy Nightshade (Daryl Frazier): Terminal Intensity, Gizmos
Bob Richert: Beyond Our Control fanzine; Founder, operator of Gulcher fanzine and label
Rich Stim: MX-80, Chinaboise
Scott Wooldridge: Post Raisin Band, Squares, Wooldridge Brothers

* from liner notes

Check out: **www.gulcher.gemm.com**

THE

Interview by Donny Moscow and Victor Fontanelli

MRR: WHAT'S HAPPENING ON PLANET SLICKS RIGHT NOW?

Pierre: I'm eating! I love eating, although I never gain any weight, which sucks 'cause I wanna be fat so I can buy T-shirts from the USA without ordering kid's sizes.

Robin: We've been working on the release of our third record, *Fuck Your Fortune*. It will be an LP compilation with Rowdy Ramblers from Stockholm, Rawhypnols from Norrköping, and Jet Black Gasoline from our hometown, Linköping. We're also putting the final touches on the audio tracks for our coming MC. That one will be thirteen songs by us on one side and a compilation from our former drummer Linus' record label Pink Noise Collective (pnc-media.org) on the other one. We've agreed to call that one *Been Where Done What*. I'm also gonna sneak in a song by my other band, Glorius Dead on that one.

What's more, we've been short of a drummer and a rehearsal room since I moved from Linköping six months ago.

Pierre: No drummer, no solo guitar. No rehearsal room. No fun.

Robin: We're about to start fooling around with the drummer of Fistful, and if it works out, we can use their rehearsal room. If it doesn't, it might be fun to start fucking around with drum loops; we've got a friend who's got turntables and everything!

MRR: HOW PUNK IS THAT?

Robin: Well, we won't release anything that's not about the best songs we've ever heard, as always. We've gone so far into distortion-land that people won't hear the difference. Playing with fucked-up sounds, played live or play-backed, is about the funniest thing you could do in the creative process. In some way, we'll have to find out how to keep that physical, energetic live kick, whether or not we're gonna incorporate any play-backed shit beyond noise and vocal samples into the mess.

MRR: WOULD YOU PLEASE TELL THE STORY ABOUT HOW SLICKS CAME TO EXIST?

Pierre: Me and Jake "Jägarn" The Snake, our former hit man, decided to form a band in the vein of classic Swedish acts like Anti-Cimex — black-and-white pictures of war, lyrics about misery, and so on. But, it never came to that point. Instead, a punk-junking son of a bitch played us Electric Frankenstein! And that's that, we got hooked on US punk rock bands like Electric Frankenstein and others like Supersuckers, Dwarves, and Zeke.

MRR: ON YOUR SONG, "SLEEP RECIPE", THE OPENING LINE READS: "I AIN'T GOT NO AMBITION, AIN'T GOT NO GRAND VISION," BUT, COME ON! EVERYONE'S GOT AN AMBITION TO DO SOMETHING. SO WHAT'S YOURS?

Pierre: I think my biggest motivation comes from drugs, boredom, and the ever-present feeling of not knowing what to do, and why I don't do it.

Robin: It was Pierre who came up with that line, but I could relate to it, because people these days have way too fucking many of other people's demands hanging over their heads and pulling them down, and they call that, "ambition." "Ambition" these days is pleasing others who do not know one shit about you and who do not care as long as you do their dirty work. Anytime anyone decides to just take it easy for five minutes, they're considered lazy slobs, and I wanted to make this disgusting, vile, frightening picture of a *superslob!* Like Pierre, ha ha! That's my ambition! Freaking people right the fuck out!

MRR: HEY PIERRE, ROBIN TOLD ME THAT THE SHADOW OF YOUR HAIR USED TO LOOK LIKE THE TIP OF A PENIS, THAT YOU USED TO CRUSH BUGS UNDERFOOT JUST TO SEE WHAT THEY LOOKED LIKE SQUISHED, AND THAT THE BOTH OF YOU WERE GREAT FANS OF *BEAVIS AND BUTTHEAD* WHEN YOU WERE IN YOUR EARLY TEENS. I DON'T BELIEVE THAT BULLSHIT FOR ONE SECOND. IT'S LIKE HE CAME UP WITH THOSE STORIES AND A LOT MORE JUST TO PROMOTE YOUR WHITE TRASH IMAGE. AM I RIGHT? IF I'M NOT, WHICH ONE OF YOU WERE BUTTHEAD?

Pierre: I guess I'm Beavis.

MRR: ROBIN PLAYS THE BASS AND SINGS IN SLICKS, BUT IN THE EARLY DAYS HE JUST SANG. WHAT MADE HIM PICK UP THE BASS?

Robin: Pierre and Victor, our other original guitar player, used to fight over who'd play bass at every rehearsal and every gig. No one wanted to play bass. No one other than Robin had the guts to sing, and I wasn't coordinated enough to play bass and breathe at the same time. Later on, I learned how to.

MRR: YOU'VE HAD A FEW LINE UP CHANGES, HOW COME AND HOW HAS THE CHANGES AFFECTED YOUR SOUND?

Pierre: I think you should ask Robin why our former drummer left us. Slic Vic moved to Göteburg for his studies long before us, so we brought in Antuan on solo guitar and he's a better guitar player, simple as that, but he's more of a problem child, as well. So we became more crazy and raw sounding. a

MRR: PIERRE TOLD ME TO ASK YOU WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR FIRST DRUMMER, ROBIN.

Robin: Jack tended to become an asshole when he was drinking, which he had been doing on pretty much a daily basis for about ten years when he quit the band. I threatened to quit if Antuan and Pierre let him aboard again. Sure as hell, he was a victim too, maybe more than anyone in Slicks, but it all came down to me having to find the fine line between charity and right-out being a shit-taking coward. Anyway, he's got a family now, and I'm happy for him because, asshole or not, he really deserves to be happy. There's no bad blood between us now.

SLICKS

MRR: IN THE *HOUSEHOLD REMEDY* SLEEVE, YOU CREDITED YOUR SECOND DRUMMER LINUS FOR THE RECORDING, MIXING, AND SAMPLING. DOES HE OWN A STUDIO, OR WHAT? HAS HE RECORDED ANY OTHER BANDS?

Pierre: That dudes got shitloads of stuff to do! He's always occupied with something. Yeah, he's got a studio. Yeah, he's recorded lots of other groups. One would think he's got ants or something up his ass.

Robin: We did the session in our rehearsal room on Linus "Illnuss" Anderson's mobile studio equipment. He's become the main man in recording punk, outlaw country, and hardcore in Linköping cause he's the cheapest, around 14 dollars per day and band member; because he cares about what kind of sound the bands want, unlike the other masturbators who just wants to show off all they think they know how to do; and because he knows how make it all sound raw and preserve the live energy.

MRR: ON THE SAME SLEEVE, YOU ACTUALLY CREDIT YOUR ARTWORK DUDE SVANTE BURNER AS A MEMBER OF THE MUSICAL GROUP ON THE *HOUSEHOLD REMEDY* SLEEVE. ISN'T THAT A BIT HIPPIE-ISH?

Pierre: Yeah, but he's a bit of a hippie-ish nightmare, so...

MRR: THE SOUND'S REAL DISTORTED ON THE *HOUSEHOLD REMEDY* 7", BUT ITS MOSTLY MID-RANGE. ARE YOU HAPPY WITH IT? WHERE DID YOU RECORD IT?

Robin: Linus and Pierre thinks it got too raw after we got them back from the pressing plant, but I think it's perfect! Pierre's guitar is about twice as loud as anything else in the mix, but that's what a real punk sound is about, if you ask me. Real, fucking painfully loud guitars. It also masks the shitty vocals.

Human ears are designed to hear mid — I think it's somewhere around 500hz, close to the frequency of human voices — better than any other frequency, that's why you'll often hear a woman's voice better than the voice of a man, because women's slightly higher voices are often closer to that most listenable frequency. Sound nerds always cut those frequencies in live and studio sound, because they're not pleasant to listen to, but Slicks are here to do *damage*. We're not here to please.

MRR: YOUR SOUND HAS BEEN COMPARED TO POISON IDEA AND THE FU'S, ARE THOSE BANDS THAT YOU LISTEN TO?

Pierre: Not until people told us that. I can't recall ever hearing FU's at all. Poison Idea I like now.

MRR: WHAT KIND OF RESPONSE HAVE YOU RECEIVED FROM PEOPLE REGARDING THE *HOUSEHOLD REMEDY* 7"?

Robin: The people who like to see us live loved it. That's about five people. We haven't received anything but great reviews in zines and netzines, either. The worst review was like, "Disillusioned cowboys on speed!" I think that's pretty flattering.

MRR: HOW DID YOU GET IN TOUCH WITH NOT ENOUGH RECORDS? HAVE YOU BEEN IN TOUCH WITH ANY OTHER RECORD COMPANIES OR DISTRIBUTORS?

Pierre: I can't really remember, but I do believe it was Konfrontation that introduced them to us. Yeah, Earth Records from the USA wanted to use one of our songs on a comp CD, but the fucker I talked to hasn't replied. Anyone knows something about this please tell us. And tell them that we want lots of money!

MRR: ONE THING THAT HIT ME ABOUT THE *HOUSEHOLD* 7" IN ADDITION TO THE FUCKING TOWERING INFERNO OF A SOUNDS CAPE WAS THAT YOU PUT SAMPLED DIALOGUE FROM MOVIES IN BETWEEN ALMOST EVERY SONG. WHAT'S THAT ABOUT? ARE YOU BIG FANS OF FILM, OR ARE YOU JUST ANAL?

Pierre: Well it can be like colors to a cartoon.

MRR: AREN'T SAMPLES KIND OF 1991?

Pierre: Well isn't living in London kind of 1888?

MRR: YOU'RE NOT VERY SECRETIVE ABOUT DRUG USE IN YOUR LYRICS AND SAMPLES. HALF OF THE LYRICS AND SAMPLES ON THE 7" SEEM TO BE ABOUT DRUG USE. DO YOU THINK IT'S COOL TO USE DRUGS OR ARE YOU SINGING SO MUCH ABOUT THEM BECAUSE, YOU KNOW, THAT'S WHAT PUNK ROCK BANDS SING ABOUT?

Pierre: Drugs are cool and cool punk rock bands sing about them. Actually, I don't do drugs now, I do work now and it hasn't made me feel much better. I'm still bored.

MRR: WHAT'S THE STUPIDEST THING THAT YOU'VE EVER DONE SOBER?

Robin: I tried to steal a comic book for my girlfriend from a store in a galleria. That was shit-stupid because the book had an alarm thing in it, which I couldn't find, for once. The security guys came running into the galleria from the same entrance I was trying to escape through.

MRR: ON TO ROBIN'S ROCK 'N' ROLL NICKNAME, ROBIN GOODFELLOW. IT'S THAT EVIL LITTLE PUCK/GOBLIN IN THE FAIRYTALES, RIGHT? ANTUAN ROCKAMOORA IS FROM PULP FICTION, AND DEAD MANDERSON WALKING IS CLEARLY SOME KIND OF WORDPLAY ON "DEAD MAN WALKING." I GUESS SVANTE BURNER JUST SOUNDS COOL, BUT I JUST CAN'T FIGURE OUT YOUR NAME, "PIERRE BESVAIR." IS THAT SWEDISH? WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

Pierre: Yup, that's Swedish alright and it means you got problems!

MRR: PIERRE, ROBIN TOLD ME THAT IN LINKÖPING, EVERYBODY STARTS TO LAUGH OR JUST MAKE A SMUG "SO, YOU'RE ONE OF *THOSE*

GUYS" FACE WHEN YOU MENTION THE SLICKS, WHILE IN OTHER TOWNS, NO ONE KNOWS WHO YOU GUYS ARE. HAVE YOU, SO TO SPEAK, GONE FOR THE BAND EVERYBODY LOVES TO HATE APPROACH, OR ARE YOU JUST TOO LAZY TO PROMOTE YOURSELVES PROPERLY?

Pierre: Hey! What can I say? Linköping is a town where people cry over some shit they say! I think we didn't go for any approach at all. And 'cause we never felt like we could fit in anywhere, people never really cared about us.

MRR: WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THE LINKÖPING SCENE? ARE THERE ANY GROUPS, CREWS OR VENUES YOU'D LIKE TO MENTION, GOOD OR BAD! WHAT HAVE YOU GOT TO SAY ABOUT THE TOWN IN GENERAL?

Pierre: It used to be a hardcore stronghold town. So if you didn't play hardcore music you didn't get much of an audience. It's getting better, though. Bands like Outlast and Nine come from Linköping. Skylten and the Rockbar are the only places to play. The town sucks, but it could be worse. Thanks to the university, it gets fresh blood every now and then, although you hate the students if you're born and bred in Linköping.

MRR: YOU SAID YOU WERE MAKING A FANZINE?

Robin: Yeah, it's pretty much the paper equivalent to Slicks. For this new issue, due in May, we're interviewing Gluecifer, a great, real original rock band from Oslo, Norway; Electric Eel Shock, rock 'n' roll/heavy metal motherfuckers from Tokyo, Japan; Mono, a kind of later Neurosis-sounding art rock band, also from Tokyo, who makes unbelievably beautiful and destructive music; Movements, sixties garage rock from Gothenburg; and the Dwarves. We're also talking to a bunch of different kinds of rebels, graffiti artists, activated anarchists, and natch drug dealers. We tried to make this issue something of a "how-to get by if you're born broke" thing with a "how-to guide to shoplifting" and such.

MRR: DO YOU CONSIDER YOURSELVES A PART OF THE DIY SCENE? HOW MUCH OF THE WORK THAT COMES WITH BEING IN A BAND DO YOU ACTUALLY DO YOURSELF? HAVE YOU GOT ANY OTHER PROJECTS?

Pierre: I don't know, I haven't really thought about that. I write my songs and do a little bit of this and a little bit of that, I tend to let Robin do all the hard work. I'm probably more of a concept dude.

MRR: BESIDES PLAYING IN SLICKS, WHAT DO YOU DO DURING THE WEEK; DO YOU WORK, STUDY, TAKE GOLF LESSONS?

Robin: Yeah, I'm taking golf lessons so I can beat the living shit out of Alice Cooper and Johnny Rotten when I see them on the golf course!

No, I'm mopping floors at a chain clothes store. It's more punk than anything, cause a) It's kind of New York Dolls to work in a clothes store and b) I hate it so much I'm gonna write the best punk album ever when we find a rehearsal room and a drummer.

Otherwise, Pierre and I sometimes work at a logistics company unloading big fucking containers, and that rocks because a) I get to spend time with Pierre and get paid for it and b) we're hoping to get into the large-scale smuggling scene that way.

MRR: ROBIN, PIERRE TOLD ME THAT YOU HAVE BEEN TRYING TO GET YOUR DRIVER'S LICENSE FOR OVER THREE YEARS NOW, WHY ISN'T IT WORKING OUT FOR YOU? ARE YOU A LEAD FOOT AND A SPEEDER PERHAPS?

Robin: My girlfriend thinks it's because I look like your typical drunk driver. I guess Sweden is pretty known for its safe traffic (or it's just the Swedes who drive like cowards in general, whatever) but I have failed on four driver's tests so far. If things don't get better, I'll just have to start driving regularly without a license. In Sweden, if you stay away from the main roads in June, you're likely to get pulled over by cops like, every fifth year. And it's called a *wing* foot and a speeder, fool!

MRR: PIERRE, ROBIN ALSO TOLD ME YOU ARE (OR WERE, HE WASN'T SURE) A BIG FAN OF SWEDISH HIP-HOP. HAS GRIME COME TO SWEDEN YET? WHAT DOES THE SCENE LOOK LIKE?

Pierre: I used to listen more, before it started to suck. Or maybe I don't pay enough attention to what's happening. PSTQ rules Swedish hip-hop, according to me.

MRR: SO THIS INTERVIEW IS FOR *MAXIMUM ROCK 'N' ROLL*, WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT IT? HAVE YOU READ IT?

Robin: The only people in Linköping who were worth hanging with were junkies and crusties, so I've picked up a few issues from the crusties' bathroom floor. I like the political view of it better than the musical one because I can relate to the talk-action=nothing politics, and because hardcore is fucking boring, except Wolfpack and Driller Killer.

MRR: I READ ABOUT THIS BLOKE THAT WANDERED THE STREETS OF SAN DIEGO BY NIGHT, ALONE, BECAUSE HE WAS HAVING A LIFE CRISIS. HE DID THAT FOR SEVERAL MONTHS UNTIL ONE DAY HE TOOK A BEATING, ENDING UP HOSPITALIZED FOR QUITE A WHILE. WHEN HE GOT OUT OF THE HOSPITAL HE WAS NO LONGER AFRAID OF DYING AND HE KNEW WHAT HE WANTED TO DO WITH HIS LIFE. HAVE YOU EVER HAD A MOMENT LIKE THIS WHEN YOU'VE HIT ROCK BOTTOM AND THE ONLY WAY IS UP?

Robin: I guess one thing that happened recently had that effect on me, like now I can see what I *don't* wanna do with my life. My father, who's been prematurely retired for the last twenty years, had a total breakdown. At first he just smashed his and my mother's living room to pieces, then he became this weird genius in the making eccentric for a few weeks, and finally, went fucking insane. Right a-fucking-way to the institution. He's better now, but different. I recognize some of his shitty behaviour and impulses in myself, the impulse to just hide away in my apartment of pedantic order and never see other people as anything but fucking irritation.

Being poor, even if it's just by Western standards, can make you pretty bitter, especially if your so fucking scared of Big Bad Brother or having to assimilate to make friends. My father never talks about his feelings, so all I can do is guess what built up to that shit, and see which pieces of it I might have picked up. My mother worked most of the time when I was growing up, so I learned from him. Also, it hit me pretty hard because he did kind of the same things I am doing now when he was my age, he became obsessed with books, film, and music; did drugs stole shit. I guess the lesson is that whatever easy way out you take, there's a price. And don't ever expect Big Brother or other people to leave you alone just because you leave them alone. No one's really innocent, so you might as well throw the first rock and make it a big one!

MRR: ARE YOU A FAN OF CONSPIRACY THEORIES? WHAT IF THE WORLD IS REALLY RUN BY A LEAGUE OF SUPER GENIUSES? WOULD YOU REALLY GIVE A SHIT?

Pierre: A league of super evil geniuses running the world? Well, I would believe if I could, but you know, this world has to burn.

MRR: WHAT MAKES YOU THINK YOU'RE SUCH A PUNK ROCK GENIUS? DON'T YOU REALIZE THERE ARE HUNDREDS OF BIG-MOUTHED BOZOS LIKE YOU ON EVERY BLOCK IN EVERY MEDIUM-TO-LARGE-SIZED TOWN IN THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE? IT'S LIKE "I'M SO REAL, OPEN-MINDED, AND PC — I LISTEN TO GUN CLUB! BLAH BLAH BLAH!"

Robin: So fucking what? That's democracy! There're millions like me. Besides, Pierre and me are, as opposed to most of the other talkers, getting shit done. I got nothing to say; I'll say it anyway, yeah yeah, *yeah!*

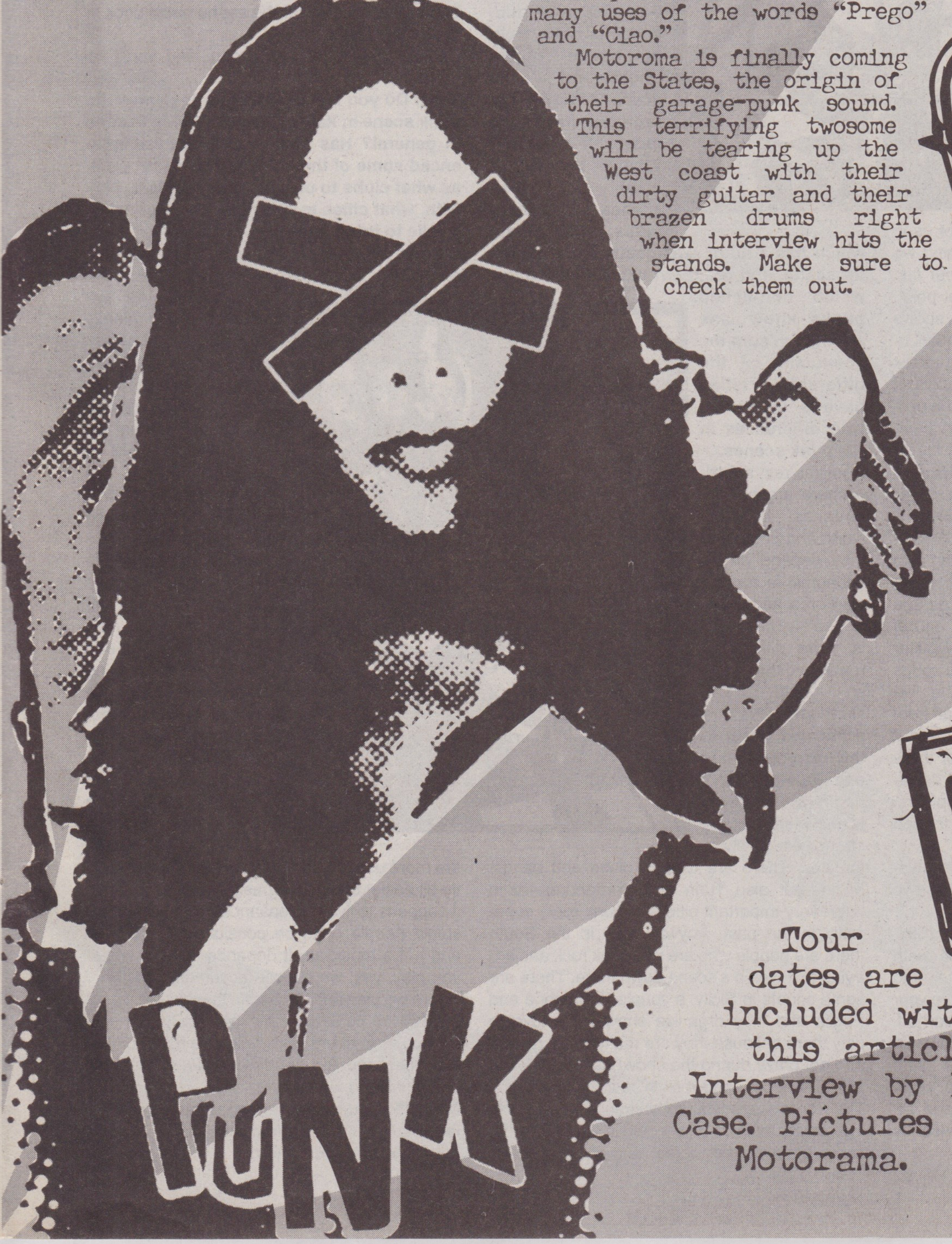
MOTORAMA

Guila's distro is called Porca Madonna, which translates loosely into, "The Virgin Mary is a Fascist Pig." Guila rides trains all over Italy selling fanzines, records, and buttons at shows. She knows everybody. After having traveled with her to a couple of music festivals in the North, we split ways in Modena. I told her I was returning to meet Arwen, our old coordinator at MRR, and that we would stay with Daniela from Motorama. "Oh, Motorama!" she said with a fist in the air as she left me at the station.

Oh, hell yeah, Motorama! would be more accurate. Several hours later, Arwen and I had met up in Rome and we were relaxing at a hip pub in a residential area few tourists would check out. We got drunk with two badass black-haired punk girls who drank their beer slowly and laughed at our jokes. How could we be so lucky?

Laura and Daniela have been causing a ruckus in Rome for the past ten years. They took me to a great show they were playing where I met all different kinds of punks who loved their music. Between bands, I learned about the scene in Naples, how to sneak beer into over-priced Italian rock clubs that scorn punk shows, and the many uses of the words "Prego" and "Ciao."

Motoroma is finally coming to the States, the origin of their garage-punk sound. This terrifying twosome will be tearing up the West coast with their dirty guitar and their brazen drums right when interview hits the stands. Make sure to check them out.



Tour dates are included with this article. Interview by Kat Case. Pictures by Motorama.

MRR: First, introduce yourselves, and tell our readers what you do in the band.

Daniela: I play guitar and sing.

Laura: I play drums and do the backing vocals.

MRR: How long have you been playing together?

Laura: We've been playing music together for a long time, since 1994, and as Motorama since 1996.

Daniela: We've known each other since we were kids, but we didn't hang out together. Once we were at one of those boring endless family dinners and I found out that Laura was taking drum lessons, so I asked her to play with me. We started rehearsing, just the two of us. After awhile, we formed a garage punk band called Buckshee with two more people.

Two years later, we met the other half of Motorama: Elena, our singer, and Gianni, our second guitarist. When we formed Motorama, there were four of us in the band. Then, the other guitarist left and we went on as a trio until the release of our first album, *No Bass Fidelity* in 2003. At that point, our singer also left. We already had shows booked and we didn't have any intention of dropping everything. I started doing the vocals and Laura began doing the backing vocals. It was fun, so we decided to go on as a two-piece. And, actually, with only two it's much more comfortable in the car!

MRR: So you've been playing music together ever since, for more than ten years. What other bands have you been in together?

Daniela: I started playing music in 1993. I bought a cheap guitar and started playing with whoever asked me to play. And I was very lucky because I was asked to play in a cool garage punk band. They all knew how to play, and of course I did not since I had bought my guitar three weeks before. I learned four or five songs and played only those ones during the live shows — I would appear and disappear from the stage. That was my very first band and it was called Harlaks. It lasted only two or three months, and then they discharged me. I decided to form my own band, The Hangin' Spiders. We played punk-wave. After that, I formed Buckshee and, finally, Motorama.

Laura and I also have a synth-punk-delirious-wave side-project called Parboiled. It's the two of us, and Filippo from Cactus.

Laura: I started taking music lessons in 1993, but I started playing drums in 1994 with Daniela. As you can imagine, it is one thing to learn how to play, but another thing to have your own band and practice what you've learned. During the years since, I've played drums in several bands, including Buckshee with Daniela. Buckshee played a lot for two years and recorded some demos: *Polaroids* and *Dr. Norton*. We started that band playing Christmas songs in a punk way for a school party.

Then there's Parboiled with Daniela and Filippo who I still play with. Parboiled doesn't play many gigs, only the very selected ones with our friends' bands, like Lost Sounds and Martin Rev.

MRR: So what do you love about rock 'n' roll?

Daniela: I like it because it's raw and visceral and it goes straight to the point.

Laura: I love the groove, what makes you move, the beat.

MRR: You've toured extensively in Italy, and one of the better-known acts there. You've been reviewed extensively by DIY punk publications there. Help non-Italian punks understand the scene in Italy. What regions have the most punks? What's the difference between scenes in Northern cities, like Milan, which has a huge, well-documented squatter scene, and Southern cities, like Naples, which non-Italian punks know less about? I'm sure the economies of the different cities have a lot to do with differences in the punk scenes.

Daniela: Yes, actually there are big differences between North and South and they depend on an economic factor, but also on a geographic one — the South is more difficult to reach and that doesn't help. The Northern cities are richer and closer to the rest of Europe and have always had a squatter scene which as very strong, especially in the 80s. There are tons of clubs and bands. Milan—but also Turin and Pordenone—have been very important cities for punk rock, especially in the past. Anyway also in the South there are people who are into punk rock and are trying to develop a scene down there. There are some squats in Sicily, a couple in Calabria and Puglia and they organize shows. We love to play there because they are really warm people and get crazy during the show! As for *RRRROMA*. Sun, Pope, and rock 'n' roll!

The Rome scene is a pretty strange one, I think. There are many things going on, gigs, clubs, some good record stores, and cool parties.... There are many good bands too at the moment, but there's too much competition and I don't like that. There's no comradely spirit.

Laura: You can see the difference between the rich North and the poor South of Italy from the number of squats, venues, clubs, pubs, etc.: many in the North, a few in the South, there is, however, a punk scene whether in the North or in the South, but the atmosphere is different. When you play in the South people are so warm that you cannot believe it, in the North (above all in Milan) they are a little bit colder.

MRR: Italian men have a reputation here in the US for being macho and sexist and so do male garage fans. Despite this, when I hung out with you guys in Rome last summer it was obvious that you commanded respect in your scene.

Daniela: They fear us! That's why—ah-ah-ah, They H-A-V-E to be R-E-S-P-E-C-T-F-U-L!

Laura: Yes, be careful! We eat humans! Look at her incisor teeth...

Daniela: Do something wrong...and you'll be gnawed!

MRR: Do you feel like there is sexism in the punk scene in Italy in specific and in Europe in general? Has dealing with it ever influenced some of the choices you made, such as what clubs to play in, what bands to play with, what cities to travel to, what gender of roadie to bring on tour?

Daniela: Yes, there's sexism in Italy and in the rest of Europe and sometimes this has influenced our choices. But as you said, usually people respect us very much. I think that it's because we've never concentrated our attention on the fact that we are a girl band. For us this is secondary. We do not need to show it off. If we are in a band it's just because we want to play! And, to tell you the truth, we are an all-girl band just by chance. We met, we got along well and we started playing together. Then we looked at each other and said, "Hey, you're a female too!"

Laura: Macho men and sexist people are everywhere, unfortunately. Now people are more used to "female musicians" so it's a little bit easier than in the past, even if sometimes it happens to live unpleasant situations, to meet stupid people or to be considered a "female" and not a musician. It depends also on where you play, yes; we choose accurately the place where we play and the bands to play with. I cannot say the punk and r'n'r scene in Italy is sexist, but, as in every field, there is a hard competition between the bands and no cooperation and this is the worst thing.

MRR: Do you resent having to talk about the fact that you are women musicians and not just musicians in general?

Daniela: No, I don't. But sometimes it bothers me when the fact that we are women seems to be more important than our music.

MRR: Tell me about touring Europe. What are some memorable shows or crazy adventures you've had on the road? The punks always love to hear about tour.

Daniela: One of the last shows, in an Austrian monastery built in the 1400s, a group of adoring fans on their knees below the stage were screaming, "We love you-ooh-ooh — we love you-ooh-ooh!" Ooh, yeah! I like to be adored! Please adore us. And then there was the concert in Hamburg, Germany with the Monsters. That was a high-voltage night! But, let's talk about *mis*adventures instead!

Laura: Like how many times we got fined in two weeks?

Daniela: Right! Five traffic tickets — one for every country we passed through. Argh! Another memorable weekend was when Laura got a bad backache. We were on tour and wanted to play anyway, so every day before the show, Laura spent a couple of hours at the local hospital getting phleboclysis with all kinds of drugs to relieve her backache. The doctor was a crazy guy! He enjoyed injecting all those drugs together in her veins and actually she looked very relaxed, so why not? In the end, the wonder-doctor became a Motorama fan and asked us for a record to play during surgical operations! He played *No Bass Fidelity* during four operations — poor guys.

Laura: We've had many good shows around Europe, but one I want to specifically mention is one in Amsterdam at De Diepte last August, a very small club with a *hot* rock 'n' roll atmosphere and a garage punk audience. Then there was the beginning of our last October tour in Europe. After a show in Rome with the Demolition Doll Rods, our sound engineer, Zak, Daniela, and I loaded our small car and left for tour at around 3 am. I drank some coffee and drove, but after only three hours, we were only 300 km away from Rome, I was dead-tired and stopped the car. One hour of sleep wasn't enough to give me back the strength to go ahead and the other two were tired too, so after many stops, we reached Bologna and stopped for more rest. The next day after we had to be in Utrecht for a show. Then I gave up and Zak drove through Switzerland and Germany where we stopped for the night! The day after was a short trip but we where very tired — it was hard as a beginning of a tour.

MRR: What are the challenges of playing in a two-piece?

Daniela: When you only have two instruments, you have no choice, gotta do your best to be creative.

Laura: Problems come up when you quarrel!

Daniela: And when you're in the car and you've just argued, you have no one to talk to. Aaaaarghhh! That's bad! We did Vienna back to Rome, 14 hours of driving, without saying a word!

Laura: And then we disbanded for a couple of days!

Daniela: Yes, you know — to detoxify!

MRR: Tell us about record labels you've worked with. You used to be on Mi Vida Loca records. Giula, who owns the label, lived in San Francisco for a while a few years ago.

Daniela: Giulia is from Rome like us, but we did not know her. Bruno from Bar La Muerte, the other record label that coproduced with Vida Loca our last two records, introduced her to us. She has a good distro with cool 'zines, records and buttons – better known as the Porca-Madonna Distro.

MRR: Tell me about your recording process. Do you record digitally or analog? How involved are you with recording, who do you work with, and how do you like to record? Do you sing with the lights out and the strobe light going?

Daniela: We like our records to sound like a live show, that's our aim when we record our songs. I prefer the analog recordings, but I don't mind the digital ones. Usually, we like to be very involved in the recording process, even when there is someone else to take care of it.

Laura: We record live, with the drums and guitar together in our rehearsal room, to have the live impact and the dirty sound. We use my digital Roland 8-track workstation using three microphones for the drums and one or two for the guitar. Then we do over-dubs — guitars, claps, sounds — and we add the vocals and do the mixing. We recorded both the 7" EPs *See You at Bouledogue* and *Shy Girl* by ourselves. The album, *No Bass Fidelity*, was recorded by Bugo with an analog recorder.

MRR: I know you are way into vinyl and your records showcase a stripped-down sound.

Daniela: I like CDs because they're practical, but for me the real record is vinyl. The sound is more raw and pure and it looks better. Our records were all published in vinyl. The last 7" was *only* in vinyl.

MRR: You are coming to the States for your first West Coast tour. What excites you about traveling the US? What bands from here have influenced you?

Daniela: I grew up listening to bands from your country! Touring the US sounds like "a dream is come true!" Most of the music I've been listening to comes from the States, all the Californian '77 punk rock scene bands, the New York No Wave, Detroit proto-punk, and the Mississippi blues. I love Suicide, The Dirtbombs, Andre Williams, Bantam Roosters.

Laura: It'll be the first time I've been to the States, so I'm very excited. Everybody says San Francisco is a beautiful city; I want to see it!

MRR: What else do you want to integrate into Motorama, other than music, such as a visual aesthetic? Talk about the performance part of your live shows. Also, I am on your email list and I get these elaborate PhotoShopped flyers with great graphics. Who deals with that part of the band?

Daniela: I think that a live show is like a having a party. You just need two things to make it great: good music and cool people. Our image on stage is very minimalist: a guitar, a drum kit, and the two of us. That's all. We hate stuff like strobe lights and fog machines.

As for a visual aesthetic, it's connected to our music. What I express with sounds I express also on an aesthetic level. I'm talking about posters and flyers, record covers, web site graphics — these are all integral parts of our music. Usually, I deal with all that, and I enjoy it very much.

Laura: I like dressing up a lot in costumes, wearing masks and makeup, even in an excessive way, for the special occasion that a concert can be. I find that the aesthetic impact only reinforces the musical one.

MRR: Anything else you want to share with our readers?

Daniela: A bottle of red wine! Cin-cin!

Laura: I want to share with them the energy of punk music. It happens sometimes during a show; maybe it could also happen while reading an interview.

MRR: We can't wait to see Motorama kick all the American punks out of their cultural comas. See you guys soon.

Daniela: Ciao, American punks! We're coming!

Laura: So, get ready! See you!

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REVOLUTION CAME TOO LATE TO SAVE THEM

The Story of Faction

By Lance Hahn

From the squats and housing co-ops of Hackney, came Faction. Not to be confused with the skate rock band from California, London's Faction came from one of the anarcho seats of culture that would evolve into several other pivotal bands.

Rob Challice, founding member and bassist: "I lived in Warminster, Wilts. when 12 in '76 and hung around with a gang. Up to then we spent all our money on cigs and cider (I had just moved on from model railways). We heard about punk very early and just had to hear as it was released.

"First single: 'Hangin' Around'/'London Girl'-The Stranglers. Some of that gang, including my best mate Bruce, went on to form bands like Stupid Humans, Subhumans, and Organised Chaos."

Rob--who, along with drummer Martin, would survive a number of lineups--then moved to Kent and was immediately ensconced in the local punk scene, first as fanzine editor and then as amateur musician.

Rob: "I was 'lucky' to then move to another hive of punk activity, north Kent. With two mates we started *Enigma* fanzine, which was printed on the local church's Gestetner printing machine (my dad was a vicar). One of those mates, Oscar, fancied himself as a singer and then Anthrax (UK version) were formed. Cue rehearsals in church halls, etc. We were crap up until the point myself and the other singer, Sue, left! Then, next thing I know, they were on Crass Records and I left Kent to live in London."

The short time he spent living Kent was a positive experience overall, with a large and active punk scene based around regular gigs in Gravesend. "In Kent, some people were into Oi, some into the anarcho stuff. We had the Red Lion in Gravesend, which put on regular gigs. So there was a scene. Also running a fanzine meant we were in touch with the outside world."

It was at this time that Rob got his first real exposure to the anarcho scene: "Fod, who I started *Enigma* fanzine with, owned one of the original Small Wonder-issue Crass *Feeding of the 5000* albums. 'Do they owe us a living? Of course they fucking do.' From that point we got to know Crass, Poison Girls, the Epileptics, UK Decay, etc. *Enigma* fanzine ranted about all the right/wrong things, plus it came with a free screen-printed patch."

In some ways, he was at the right place at the right time to be directly involved in some of the best aspects of the growing anarcho scene.

Rob: "We wanted to change the world: Stop the City, Battle of Wapping, etc. A lot of the people involved in that scene were living outside London when 'punk happened' in London. We wanted to be a part of something and were ready to get off our arses and do something. We started labels, bands, fanzines, promoted gigs, protested, squatted houses and venues, etc. Concurrently, indie labels and indie record distribution (Rough Trade, etc.) were starting to happen; it was part of the same thing. We didn't change the world, but just as importantly, we changed our world."

Shortly after making the move from Kent to Hackney in December of 1981, a rudimentary version of Faction was formed with someone named Ann-Dee. This lineup, though they only played three shows, was the official start for the band.

Rob: "Sue, Martin, and I were all from Kent and formed Faction. Sue was fourteen and shouldn't have been in a punk band, but she looked great with spiky hair. Martin and I lived in a squatted street in Hackney, Brougham Road. I lived at number 96 and we had a rehearsal space in our basement."

As was the case with many punk bands, though few will admit it, there were less than profound reasons for choosing the name.

Rob: "I think it was by democratic vote. The name scored quite highly because you could circle the A and N, and convert the O in the CND sign. Essential stuff."

That lineup dissolved by the spring of 1982. New guitarist Paul Vantransit, according to *Acts of Defiance* fanzine #7, was "hiding in a pub in the wilds of the West Country, perfecting his rural accent and listening to 'zum shit kicking rock n roll.' With few questions and even fewer answers, he joined and the band had some direction." Coming from a few fairly obscure bands (the Snails, This Bitter Lesson), Paul wound up being the right person, sticking with the band through to the end.

In those early days, the band had both simple goals and lofty ambitions.

Paul, in *Prisoner of Charity* fanzine #1: "My aims as far as the band is concerned is just to play live on a regular basis, and communicate with these people. I'd like to touch on a few minds outside the so-called 'scene'. To achieve this is going to mean persistence on our part, talk until people want to listen, until what we're saying is

in such a way that people can't really refuse us this."

Martin, in *Prisoner of Charity*: "Personally, as the band goes I'd like to get to the stage where we can branch out and make it more than just a drummer, a guitarist, a bassist, and a singer. I'd like to surpass all that, and get to the stage where we're just a collective working together doing different things and experimenting more, with sounds and ideas."

Especially in those early days, the band was supportive and involved with the politics of the time.

Martin, in *Prisoner of Charity*: "Yeah, I think direct action is fine to an extent, although through experience a lot of direct action is caught up in macho bravado bullshit image... ALF do really good things, and also groups like Greenpeace, Sea Shepard, etc. I mean even if say gluing butchers' locks doesn't cut down the meat trade, but it's there as a token act of defiance, and it may prove a point that people are prepared to take risks by breaking the law to highlight something that is usually left in the dark. And it's a personal thing if people want to take direct action. It's up to them. I'd never criticize anyone who doesn't agree with it or doesn't want to do it. I think people who do take direct action should think a lot about what and why they're doing it. Because sometimes it can do more harm than good. As for damaging people, those who do are just self-righteous as much as those they oppose. Just to think they can destroy or maim 'opponents' just because of a difference of opinion, someone who can do that to another person is probably a very insensitive, unemotional lump of fibers, as bad as anyone who can shoot, bomb or kill another human being other than in self-defense, say in El Salvador where the 'rebels' have taken up arms. They haven't really got too much choice 'coz it's almost a do or die situation, but here, although there's a strict set of rules to follow, if you're careful you can get away with quite a lot."

Rob was also inspired by his surroundings: "Obviously living in London was a whole lot different than living with your parents.

"The Hackney/East London/Squat scene was now home to Mob, Zounds, and Blood and Roses. Those bands were embraced by the *Kill Your Pet Puppy* (fanzine) collective, who was dressed in Day-Glo, fishnets, crimped purple and pink spiky hair, etc. They looked great and were more interested in personal politics than changing the world. Crass and co. were still important, but every week there was a new band releasing an EP on Crass Records, dressed in black telling us that bombs and government were bad. Our priorities were now stealing electricity, vegetables from Spitalfields market, etc. I was active in putting on shows, first at the Wapping Anarchy Centre and then the squatted school on Harrow Road *(Centro Iberico -ed.)*."

Taking the name from his address, Rob founded 96 Tapes, the quintessential, punk rock tape label along with Bluurg from Wessex and BCT (Bad Compilation Tapes or Borderless Countries Tapes, depending on when you knew Chris) from California. Earliest releases included Rubella Ballet *Live at the Starlight*, D&V *The New Beginning* demo, A-Heads *Live Demos*, a demo from Paul's previous group, This Bitter Pill, and a split live tape from a gig with Faction and the Subhumans recorded on a UK tour they did together.

Of course, it made sense that Faction record for 96 Tapes. That became the *Through the Window* cassette album. Though they were hardly the only band at the time releasing a tape instead of vinyl, that didn't stop people from questioning their reasoning.

Martin, from *Acts of Defiance* fanzine #7: "'Coz singles are round and singles have silly holes in the middle and we're really square. So a tape and booklet seemed appropriate."

Rob, from *Acts of Defiance*: "Well, the *Through the Window* tape gave us some studio experience and the chance to release something totally on our own backs. I think it's something a band should attempt before tackling a record... There's also a lot less cash and hassle involved. To release a single with decent production and cover you need at least 500, our tape, which is basically demo quality, only cost a fraction of that."

"Demo quality" or not, the tape is a raw studio recording giving some idea of what the band were probably like live. Melodic without being pop, up-tempo without getting near hardcore, the music was in some ways reminiscent of the UK Subs, with guitar flourishes just short of being too rock 'n' roll. Sue's vocals are in many ways reminiscent of the brilliant Action Pact or the Expelled. Songs like "Heads You Lose," "Realization," and "Another Pretty Face" were unusual as well as aggressive enough to appeal to punk audiences. Of course, there were also comparisons to similar-minded Rubella Ballet.

Rob, in *Acts of Defiance*: "We've been really pleased with the response we've had. A lot of people have been interested in discussing the contents of the booklet and the lyrics. The recording and mixing could have been a lot better, but they were both rushed. Some people prefer our live tape, which we release because it's a lot more powerful. There's been quite a few comparisons to Rubella Ballet and their Ballet Bag. However I think we're heading in quite a different direction from them so it shouldn't be a lasting tag."

The booklet, and many of the 96 Tapes releases, came with full booklets, reprinting the bands lyrics along with further information on their ideas and philosophies. Their burnout on the overuse of clich s like "the bomb" and "the system" was obvious in their words as well as song titles like "Obligatory War Song."

Rob, from *Acts of Defiance*: "What was said was that there are many people who'll listen to, say, a song about war or the system and just think no more than 'there's another song about...' But if you can take a song to a more personal level where the sub-

ject is self-righteousness, or love, or an emotion that can be experienced in everyday life then it can become more relevant to the listener."

The result was lyrics leaning more to the abstract, like "All That Glitters":

Midas your touch blackens the air
Gone is the yellow of your desire
Self-colouring through blinkered eyes
You curse and praise through stifled lies

You are the mental gate of will
Stubborn to the end, no overspill
Defend your touch with compromise
Understand! Fools gold is your prize

Paul, from *Acts of Defiance*: "To understand this song, you need to understand the myth of King Midas, a person who via a wish, got 'the gift' to turn things into gold, merely by touching them. But the whole concept backfired on him when his food turned to gold, his water, and his daughter on his embrace... The song is about self-righteousness; the 'black touch' being the simile there, I think after that it's very easy to work out the idea behind the song."

To many it would seem a necessity for bands with female members to address issues of sexism in its many forms. Faction was no different, as in "Love in a Trance":

The "perfect woman" posing and proud
A fluttering flower on show to the crowd
She looks at him, then she looks at me
Which is the man, which will it be
Five hours a day in front of the mirror
She worked and worked to perfect that shimmer

What love is left
When you allow yourself
To be brought and sold.

Rob, in *Prisoner of Charity*: "For a start 'Love In a Trance' can be applied to both sexes. It's basically about vanity, and vanity goes deeper than appearance. It's the idea that anybody has to 'sell' themselves to be accepted by another person that is being criticized. Sure, people shouldn't be judged on appearance, but that's what the girl is expecting people to do to her. Why worry so much about makeup, etc? Let people see the real you."

Martin, in *Prisoner of Charity*: "I don't personally see anything bad about a person wearing makeup, or projecting an outside image, 'coz usually the outside appearance is just a projection of the real person inside, that lump of fibers called the human body. Whenever I wear anything other than that necessary for survival, say makeup, I wouldn't do it to make myself above anyone or to cover the real me. 'Coz that is the real me. I see it as making a very bleak bland society colourful and pretty like say decorating a one-in-a-million house with psychedelic colours and project its individuality and maybe create a better atmosphere. Like if you were moving into a room and had a choice of two. Would you choose the one with the raw materials such as bricks and plaster and dust and cobwebs apparent or would you choose the one with Day-Glo orange and purple spirals painted on the ceiling, and colours everywhere. I think the song is just criticizing people for trying to cover themselves up and it's observing the game of 'love' that people sometimes like to play, battling over the glistening prize at the disco, and then at home there's nothing at all under that image. And I think that applies to both sexes."

Needless to say, there was an element of psychedelia to the band's approach. With the movement off and on being labeled Hippie Punk, drugs played more of a role than is usually discussed. For Faction, it was brought up often as well as in the booklet for *Through The Window*.

Martin, in *Prisoner of Charity*: "A lot of the time it's called escapism, but then so is watching TV or films or eating something that's unnecessary for survival. You can learn a lot from drugs and experiment with your mind and body. That appeals to some people, but not to everybody."

Martin, in *Acts of Defiance*: "Well, seriously I think drugs are for people who want to say 'Wow!' And why not? You need a room to hide in when the dollar bandits ride the black merry-go-round of reality. And you know utopia's not coming tomorrow, so hit the flame and fire away... It's optional!"

Upon the release of the tape, the band did a few gigs including the famous Zig-Zag squat gig. But by early 1983, the band was stagnating and not even practicing much. With too much time on her hands, Sue left in February of that year. Two months and six singers later, the band was back on track with new vocalist, Pip. When asked about the change in lineup, the band was purposefully vague.

Rob, in *Restless Peace* fanzine #1: "Basically, 'band history' is irrelevant to the cosmos now, and what happened the last time you had a mind stirring conversation with a fellow burgher... I could tell you we've been going for 'x' amount of months, the exact date of our creation is locked in some hidden corner of my cranium. This year, Sue left, after a lot of searching and auditioning of singers we discovered Pip... We are now planning another tape, some gigs in July/August and then hopefully and EP on Spider Leg..."

The result of the live gigs was another tape on 96, this time a compilation with the Mob and D&V titled *No No No Don't Drop Yer Bombs On Us They Urt*. That was followed up by another full-length cassette called *If They Give You Ruled Paper... Write the Other Way*. Though the record on Spider Leg didn't mate-

rialize, the band did wind up eventually wanting to do a 7" record, but with Bluurg instead. But before that could happen, before the end of 1983, the band went through another lineup change. Pip would leave the band to be replaced with Mel, who was on loan from the A-Heads, as well as Neil on keyboards.

Rob: "I always kept in touch with Bruce; through him I met Dick. Nothing could have prepared me for meeting Dick for the first time. He's an inspirational guy, a ball of energy and doesn't take himself too seriously. That's what set the Subhumans apart from most bands at the time, and is why they have lasted so long. The music has always been good whatever the message; you know the band enjoys what they do.

"Often the band was staying at our squat in London, consuming our food/drugs/drink--it would have been rude them not putting our EP out."

With a label backing them, the band recorded at the Abbey Road (or more likely Inner Ear) of the anarchos, Southern.

Rob: "I can't remember much about the recording other than Southern Studios head-honcho John Loder and engineer banging his head against the mixing desk as we tried for the nth time to get an essential keyboard time. I don't think he understood what we were doing. I don't think we knew what we were doing."

The four-track EP, titled *You've Got the Fire,* is a solid and cohesive showcase of the band's best songwriting, keyboard goof and all. Two of the songs, "Intro" and "Drowning Rats" (just called "Drowning" this time around) were originally from the first tape. Other tracks, "Blinded by the Dark" and "Turn Away," can now be seen as a bridge between the early 80s melodic punk sound with later 80s groups like Dan, The Joyce McKinney Experience, and Shelley's Children. The keyboards and bass rhythm of "Turn Away" are uncannily like the song "Wake Up" by Elastica some years later. The song is the record's highlight.

Even the packaging was something special, with a full cover job printed by the band.

Rob: "I did the front cover. Paul did the inner illustration. I personally printed the covers. There was no conscious effort to do anything different, we were just creating a bit of art, unfortunately it didn't quite end up how I wanted."

But before the record could see the light of day, the band split for good, with Rob leaving to focus on non-band projects: "Personally, I was more interested in running the cassette label and the mail order company I set up, 'Wot? Distribution,' to sell indie vinyl and cassettes, imported *Flipside* magazines, etc. The lure of traveling to play exotic places like Hulme, Rochdale, Wolverhampton, etc., had worn off. It was more fun hanging out in London."

With Mel still officially in the A-Heads, keyboardist Neil would go on to play guitar for Blyth Power along with Joseph and Curtis from the Mob.

Rob: "I'd love to think that Paul (Van Transit) was still listening to Joan Jett and Van Halen, whilst still owning a star shaped Washburn guitar. Neil was probably the last guy I met from the band. I think they and Martin still live in London, whilst Mel is still in the West Country, I think."

"Basically, 'band history' is irrelevant to the cosmos now." --*Rob Challice, Faction*

With the demise of the Mob around the same time, they had lost interest in their label, All The Madmen. Initially, the label was left to a member of the Kill Your Pet Puppy Collective.

Rob: "Alistair was part of the Kill Your Pet Puppy Collective and shared a house with Mark from Mob. The Mob bequeathed the label to Alistair and then in turn myself. I continued sending them royalties, ensure the albums got distributed and got to release more albums. This was '83/'84 and I had gone self-employed to run Wot? Distribution and 96 Tapes. In that world, I was 'business'...

"It must have been around '83/'84. The Mob's *Let the Tribe Increase* had been out for a good year or so and sold 15,000 , the band had split and Mark, Curtis and Josef had no real plans for the label. I was keen to make use of the manufacture and distribution deal they had with Rough Trade Distribution. I just happened to be around Mark and Josef's gaff a lot, and I had half a business head."

Twenty years later, Rob Challice is a big-time booking agent, but still maintains certain values and ideas from that time.

Rob: "Yes in some way, however, my own personal ideas have evolved; the root of these ideas was when I started becoming aware of politics, protest and anarchism. I can't say my ideas are that recognizable now and I am sure one or two people would love to call me a hypocrite for being part of a successful commercial business. I recently met a very old mate who I hadn't see for ten years, John Travis--he is now a producer of rock/hip-hop in the States and he told of a conversation he once had with Rick Rubin. Rubin asked, 'You used to be a punk, so how come you are so respectful to other people?' It was as if being a punk meant that you had to treat everybody with insults. John explained the (UK anarcho) scene he came from and how it had affected people who had come through it. That summed it up for me." @@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@

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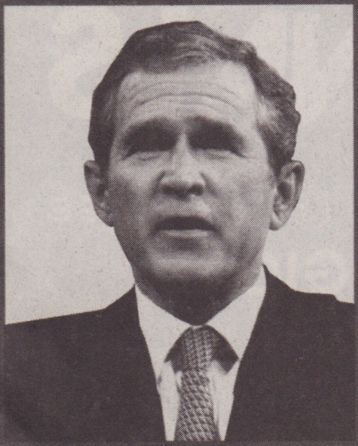

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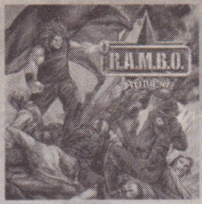
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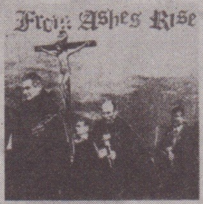
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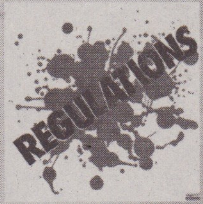
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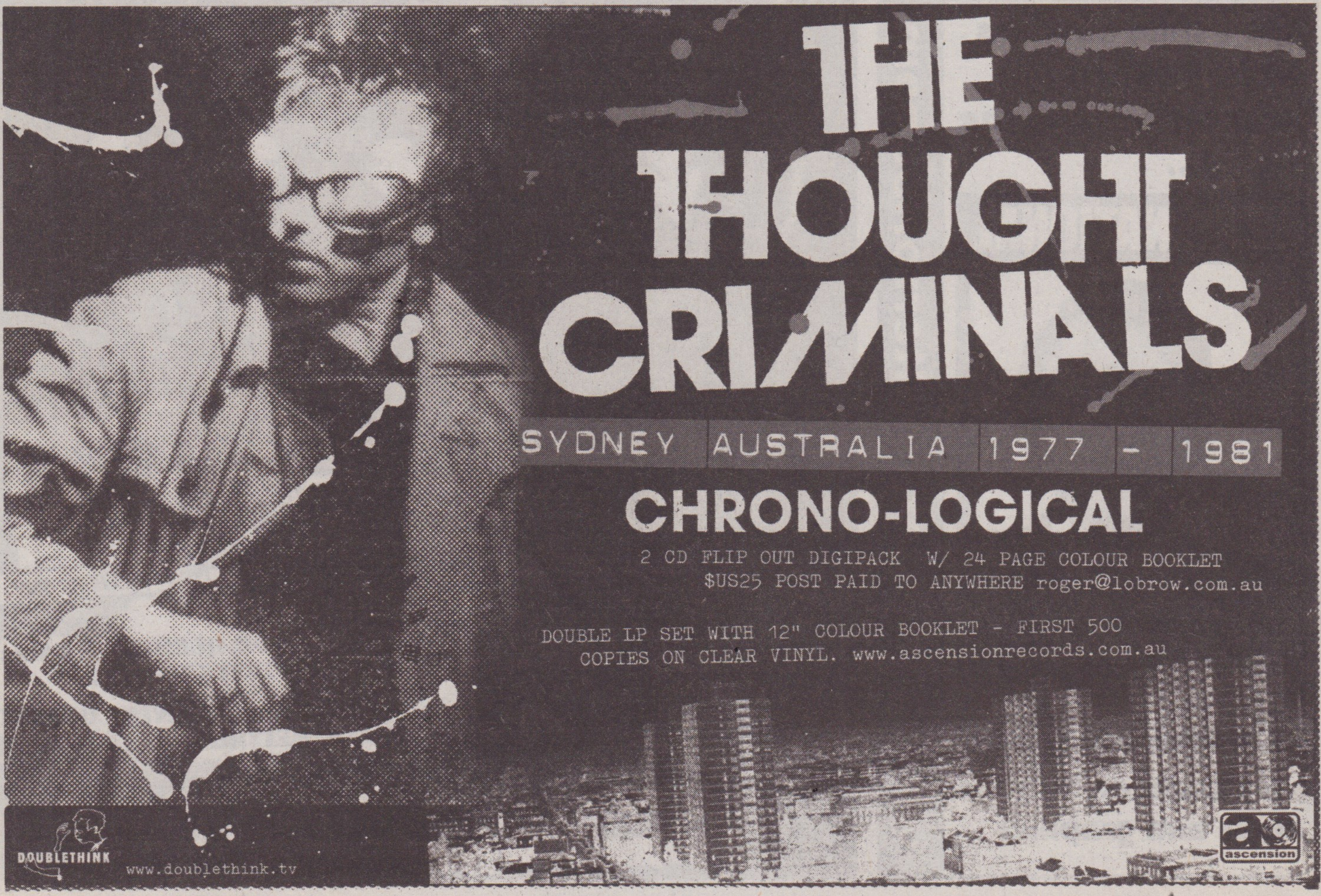

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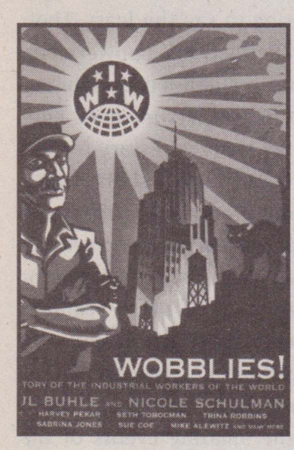


Wobblies! A Graphic History of the Industrial Workers of the World
Paul Buhle and Nicole Schulman (editors)
305 pages $25.00
Verso
180 Varick Street
New York, NY 10014-4606
www.versobooks.com

Much has bandied about recently with the success of the so-called "adult comics." Not the mega-manga nudity fare, but themes that would be lost on the average ten year-old recluse reading about people with fantastic powers and fabulous costumes. The crossover success of Frank Miller's *Sin City* from black inky page to silver celluloid is only part of this, but the success of "adult comics" goes back far further. From the World Fantasy Award, usually held for the prose author suddenly finding its way, to Neil Gaiman for his *Sandman* comics, to the Pulitzer Prize bestowed on Art Spiegelman for his holocaust story told in small panels with smaller animals, these awards raise the ire of the serious scholars.

What this book reminds us if is that comics, both strips and stand alone, have been used since the invention of the printing press and even previously, often to make a point far deeper than a caped crusader fighting crime. From The Yellow Kid outsmarting the oafish capitalist to the inflammatory editorial cartoons of papers heralded by Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin, cartoons have been used to make a succinct point against the inequalities of the system.

The visual medium also served a purpose to help make their case to the harried and the hurried, the illiterate and the illegitimate. People may not have the time or inclination to listen to an entire speech, much less willing to take the risk of being spotted and thus branded as an agitator. The comic, easily reproduced and passed from person to person, could help recruit more sympathizers than a thousand strike rallies.

Members of the Industrial Workers of the World (commonly called the Wobblies), knew this, and utilized the art form along with folk songs and simple, easily remembered slogans to help promote their cause of worker fairness and the need for unions. Now reaching the centennial of the inception, this book employs the same tactics as a celebration.

Using the art and storytelling skills of some of the underground comic darlings such as Harvey Pekar, Trina Robbins, Seth Tobocman, and Peter Kuper to lead us through the tales of strikes in Patterson, New Jersey and Lawrence, Massachusetts. Narratives include biographies of people like Mother Jones, and folk singer Joe Hill who was later executed for his support of the IWW.

But this is not a complete starry-eyed remembrance; the authors and artists are perfectly willing to talk about the IWW's flaws and eventual obsolescence and eventual rebirth. Because it should go without saying, though this book says it, the IWW, in spirit and in action, is still needed.

Like the Wobblies themselves, however, this book suffers from a lack of organization. Though it is separated into different time frames, the narratives jump back and forth. Stories and biographies of key players are repeated from different, yet far too similar angles. Artwork for the recitals go from beautiful and haunting to surreal and frightening to something that looks like a three year-old with cerebral palsy.

Still, it was a stroke of genius to present the 100-year account of the Wobblies and its members in this format. Like a hundred years gone by, there are still far too many people who can't find the time to look into the fascinating past of this important organization. This allows you to dip your toe in and learn while being entertained. Soon after, you learn that you hunger for more. And that's the point.
—Dean Carrico

Freaks & Fire: The Underground Reinvention of the Circus
J. Dee Hill (w/ photographs by Phil Hollenbeck)
176 pages - 8" x 10" - $24.95
Soft Skull Press
www.softskull.com

Freaks & Fire profiles a handful of alternative circus troupes and performers and in doing so makes "joining the circus" sound less like a put-down and more like a respected act of infinite enlightenment.

From the book: "The point [of the underground circus], much like punk rock, is that *they* are the ones doing it...They are making their own fun, creating their own entertainment rather than consuming it, and infecting the audience with a sense of possibility and participation....And if the ball drops or the tightrope walker slips—so what? We're all tripping fools in ridiculous costumes anyway."

Among those described in the book are the highly developed and stylistic performances of Seattle's Circus Contraption, whose shows are as much black humor vaudeville as they are tight-rope walking, acro-balancing, and juggling. In seeming contrast to Circus Contraption is the freeform Cloudseeding Circus of the Performative Object from Gainesville who creates a show focused more on the

object as art rather than on people. Also interviewed is the highly recognizable Enigma. Light is shed on what moved him from having a single tattoo on his left arm straight to covering his *entire* body with blue puzzle pieces.

Regardless of methods and execution Hill gives ample description and merit to a good number of performers and DIY circuses roaming the US circuit today. Every story gives an articulate glimpse into the mind of a "freak" and shows how much we humans really are the same, even if some of us choose to act on our emotions and desires and creative impulses more than others.

Hill writes with the impartial voice of a journalist. Her observations are for the uninitiated, allowing all readers to easily follow the circus slang and in-stories that her subjects bring forward. What makes the book so much more special than a mere documentary is Hill's understanding of—and obvious passion for—alternative expression, underground art, and the DIY philosophy, as well as the importance of all three in our society.

—Craigums

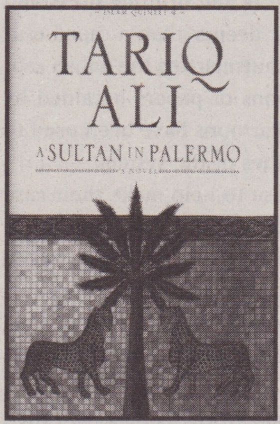
Free Women of Spain
Martha A. Ackelsberg
286 pages $20
AK Press
674-A 23rd Street
Oakland, CA 94612
www.akpress.org

This book is amazing. The topic is fascinating, the research thorough, the writing is excellent, and the analysis is highly relevant to both contemporary anarchism and feminism. Ackelsberg's book gives a detailed history of *Mujeres Libres*, an autonomous women's organization that arose from radical organizations of revolutionary Spain in the 30s. To be more specific, *Mujeres Libres* was formed in response to the limitations of organizations such as the CNT, FAI, and FILJ in addressing women's issues and empowering and mobilizing women within the Anarchist Movement. These organizations paid varying degrees of lip service to the idea of women's equality, but women were rarely in leadership roles and many of the women interviewed by Ackelsberg recounted experiences of being ridiculed or having their contributions undervalued. Added to this, women who were politically active would go home to find the same double standard perpetuated in their homes by fathers, brothers, husbands, and lovers. The women who founded *Mujeres Libres* recognized the need for an autonomous organization that would afford women the opportunity for education and participation that the existing organizations did not.

Interestingly, most women of *Mujeres Libres* did not recognize themselves as feminists. They found feminism to be by and large the pursuit of privileged women and not particularly representative of their concerns as working class women. This, of course, has been a common criticism of feminism in America throughout the 20th century. *Mujeres Libres*, however, was clearly committed to women's equality. Ackelsberg's analysis of *Mujeres Libres* in relation to contemporary anarchism and feminism is especially valuable in highlighting the complementary nature of anarchism and feminism. A feminist perspective can contribute to anarchism an appreciation of diversity. Anarchist theory, in turn, brings to feminism a sense of the multifaceted nature of oppression. This idea is as timely as ever. I think many women feel similarly in radical communities and punk scenes today as the women of *Mujeres Libres* felt. Despite all the claims of commitment to equality in our communities, women's voices are often hard to hear in a male dominated scene and women frequently aren't empowered to participate actively.

The stories of *Mujeres Libres* are inspiring to say the least. Their efforts had two main aspects, capacitacion (defined as empowerment; self-development; self-realization) and captacion (defined as mobilization into a particular party or group.) The first aspect involved education programs which gave women not only skills necessary for full participation in the movement, but confidence in those skills. Topics ranged from elementary education and basic literacy to professional training including nursing, childcare mechanics, teaching, and agriculture, as well as "social formation" classes which prepared women for activism. The second aspect was the application of these acquired skills through direct action. This often included organizing and participation in the CNT and other radical organizations. The most striking thing to me about all of this is how much was accomplished in such a short time (1936-1939) as well as the amazing events of the Spanish Civil War, which provide the backdrop. Possibilities that we dream about were lived by these women, which is an awesome prospect. Ackelsberg explores the triumphs and weaknesses of the movement and gives a lot of information to think about and apply to our current experiences as women and men and as human beings. I highly recommend *Free Women of Spain* to, well, everybody, but not to be missed if you're interested in social justice, anarchy, gender issues, or hopefully all three.

—Tress



A Sultan in Palermo
Tariq Ali
246 Pages — $24
Verso
180 Varick Street
New York, NY 10014-4606

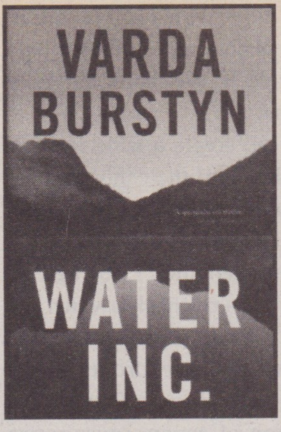
Verso Press, perhaps best known for its continued presence as the premier purveyor of leftist academic texts and releasing (or re-releasing) works by the likes of Baudrillard, Adorno, Debord, and others, does indeed publish the occasional fictional text. This time around, that text comes in the form of a new novel by world-renowned activist-author-filmmaker (is there anything he can't do?) Tariq Ali, who has spent the better part of his life critiquing the machinations of Western imperialism and striving towards positive solutions to the trappings of modern life. During the woefully-long years of the Bush presidency, Ali has remained especially prolific, becoming best known currently for releasing books on, among other things, the wars on terror and in Iraq and the immediate failings thereof (reviews of his other most current books have graced the

pages of the *MRR* book section in recent months).

Even in light of his numerous political analyses, it would be a grave mistake to cast Ali as a one-trick pony. His new novel, *A Sultan in Palermo,* continues to prove his literary prowess with its richness of detail and measured, coherent sense of storytelling. The fourth volume in Ali's long-running (the first book was published in 1996) Islam Quintet, *Palermo* recounts the story of Idrisi, a career academic and friend of the titular sultan, as he returns to his hometown of Palermo after spending years traveling the globe in an effort to produce a complete and total map of the known world. Taking place in the 1100s, Ali weaves a rather impressive historical tapestry, using his gift of vivid description and supremely empathetic characterization to elaborate on true events through a fictional lens. Though fictionalizing history remains a somewhat trendy literary device during this particular epoch (see Jeffery Eugenides' *Middlesex,* Michael Chabon's *The Adventures of Kavalier and Clay,* and the numerous *Girl with a Pearl Earring* clones), Ali handles his framework with a subtle finesse that focuses more on developing a tangible sense of environment than on simply dressing up historical events with contrived romance or intrigue. Upon returning home, Idrisi finds himself estranged from his wife, in love with an occupant of the sultan's harem, and faced with the burgeoning adulthood of his several children. During his absence, Idrisi's childhood friend sultan Rujari has come under the influence of a powerful and dangerous Catholic presence. The tension in the city is palpable, with Christians and Muslims frequently at odds, and a growing sense of rebellion and revolt amongst the Islamic community; in other words, we have all the makings of a true holy war, seen through the eyes of a man of letters reluctant to involve himself in the fray.

Now, at this point you may be thinking to yourself: "Hmmm...Christian-versus-Muslim religious conflict with a growing Islamic insurgency? A leader corrupted by his proximity to the crusading forces of Christianity? Why, this must be some kind of parable for our conflict-ridden modern world! Rujari is Bush!" To those so willing to draw one-to-one comparisons between the characters of the novel and twenty-first century political figures and situations, I offer a word of caution: though it would be impossible not to read *A Sultan in Palermo* through the eyes of the current Western involvement in the Muslim world (and, in some ways, Ali himself invites this kind of reading, especially with the somewhat clunky final lines of the main body of the text), to reduce this work to a kind of *Animal-Farm*-esque, "Snowball-is-Trotsky" brand of logic is to ultimately lessen its very effect and to whitewash the moral complexity Ali works so hard to achieve. This is not a black-and-white world, but one of rich and colorful variation, in which corrupt leaders remain loyal friends, rebellious icons express worry and fear, and apolitical academics get drawn into the storm of revolution. Though this narrative is ultimately fouled into more clear-cut hero/villain divisions by the need to tie itself up in the final pages, Ali has, for the bulk of the text, created a work of fiction both specific and resonant, invested not only in our own specific clash of fundamentalisms, but in an historical perspective on religious conflict based not on stock characters or posturing, but on real human beings enmeshed in competing circles of knowledge, power and truth.

—Maxwell Tremblay



Water Inc.
Varda Burstyn
$25 - 320 pages
Verso Books
180 Varick Street, NY, NY 10014-4606

I love thrillers. Give me a trashy novel about cold war spies or missing Soviet submarines or nefarious economic/political conspiracies (often involving some secret Nazi or Imperial Japanese organization) and I'm a happy, blissed-out reader. I just heard someone use the term "reality avoidance," and any good trashy book transports the reader into whatever situation the author concocts. The reason I'm presenting my bona fides regarding trashy thrillers is because that's exactly what this book is—with a twist.

Most thrillers—especially the espionage/Cold War ones—tend to reflect a pretty amoral mindset concerning society's moral standards. Betrayal and loyalty on the person-to-person level, however, counts for a lot more. So characters find themselves doing awful deeds in order to a) exact justifiable revenge and/or b) in the name of loyalty/honor/comradeship. A common attitude is "our war is hell, but our enemies will do much worse to us and our loved ones if we don't do it to them first," along with a strong sense of being "the other."

"The Other" is the lonely figure in the crowd who can never reveal his/her true mission to the normal people surrounding Our Hero, as they innocently get on with their insignificant yet peaceful existences. Yet Our Hero is risking everything so that the normal people can continue on with normal life without even knowing that labyrinthine layers of action, lies, and corruption are being peeled away by Our Hero as s/he gets towards the end of the mission. The only true rest Our Hero gets is either as an anonymous corpse or sworn to secrecy after a career in the shadows- it's all about plausible deniability and publicity deniability.

Since so many thrillers are set in the Cold War, they by definition usually have political slants that lean right. They aren't right-wing recruitment tools though, since the main characters are often very amoral when it comes to high-falutin' political thought and allegiances. Geo-political ideology is almost always subsumed when it comes to one-on-one private morality. Len Deighton's fun *Game Set and Match* series is a great example of this. There are very few anti-Vietnam heroes, although it seems that every thriller set past 1963 has at least one Special Forces veteran who fought in Laos/Cambodia/Vietnam. Most of these vets come out of the jungle highly trained but not blind followers of the military establishment. Almost all exhibit a cynical view of politicians and most high-ranking officers, of every political stripe.

This thriller, *Water Inc.* by Varda Burstyn, is a little different because while it mixes many of the time-honored thriller touches—including a certain amount of publicity deniability, corruption, action, and lies—it also mixes in a lot of non-standard thriller features. One major non-standard feature is the comparative publicity that the characters cooperate/instigate throughout the book. *Water Inc.* comes in out of the cold, to paraphrase John Le Carre. Like legal thrillers, much of *Water Inc.* concerns careful shaping of public perception (in legal

thrillers, that'd be the jury and the judge) along with a careful unraveling of a mysterious situation. Unlike almost all other thrillers, women characters have a much larger role in this book; I'd guess they're at least half of the major characters.

Like the best thriller writers, Burstyn can create a wide range of believable characters. She fills in the blanks about their thoughts and motivations well enough to explain how, at certain points, their inner lives cause the plot to switch directions almost instantly.

Since I hate—*hate!*—reviews that give away endings, I won't go too far into the plot details. The cover calls it an eco thriller-which fits. There's a secret group of investors who want to privatize Quebec's public water supply to add to their own massive profits at the expense of Canada, the environment, and the animals (human and non-human) that live nearby. There's a ton of action, conspiracies, and environmental information that is revealed as the book unfolds.

This is Burstyn's first novel, and it's pretty darn impressive for a first novel. There are some kinks and some flat out "deux en machina" plot twists that a more experienced novelist would've cut out or made much less blatant and questionable. The environmental information often feels like it's been cut and pasted from somewhere else. Burstyn has the chops to suss out how to write a better integration of background information with the plot next time around.

I like to imagine that this thriller is written as an answer book to Michael Crichton's recent thriller *State of Fear*, although it was probably finished long before Crichton's book was published. *State of Fear* is the best seller that basically denies the seriousness/existence of the greenhouse effect that came out in 2004. I delayed writing this review because for a couple of months I've been waiting for this book to come available at my local library, but it's a hot book here in Berkeley so I haven't been able to check it out of the library yet. The reported anti-environmental slant of Crichton's latest is a more blatant manifestation of the naturally right-leaning thriller writer (although John Le Carre savaged President GW Bush repeatedly from the Left before the war in Iraq began in 2003). It's unusual for a thriller writer to abandon his/her literary and political anonymity like Crichton and Le Carre have—although Tom Clancy has also come out with his right-wing political views and has been a frequent guest on Rush Limbaugh's radio show.

In this context, Burstyn's obvious political slant comes off as an answer to Crichton's since almost no one else is blatantly and publicly declaring their politics within the pages of their books. The unfamiliarity of combining overt political rhetoric with a standard action thriller is what has tripped me up. I'm expecting the standard trashy novel devoid of overt politics, and that's exactly where this book fails (and I suspect Crichton's, although I haven't read it yet). There are overlong sections of nothing but in-depth (and dead accurate) explanations of global warming, eco-systems, and public vs. private use of natural resources. After a while, I just skipped over these paragraphs and pages, wanting more trash and less well-intentioned political/environmental information.

As a trashy thriller, *Water Inc.* is as well written as any Michael Crichton, Len Deighton, Tom Clancy, or John Le Carre thriller. This is a beach book (suitable for vacations down the shore!) with ecological heft, going into sometimes too much detail about the environment while never losing sight of the interpersonal drama and exciting yet deadly action required to be in every quality thriller. Dig in, it's gonna be a long hot summer!

—Jesse Luscious

MOVIES

BRING ME THE HEAD OF GENE SISKEL

CAROLYN KEDDY

What Makes A Man Start Fires?

Managing to remain a punk in 2005 is not an easy thing to do. Most people would see me and say I am not punk. I don't look the role. Fine with me. Then some others who listen to my radio show call me "too punk." So am I punk or not? Who the fuck cares?

Watching **We Jam Econo: The Story of the Minutemen**, I think of those people who call the Minutemen "too jazzy." They have obviously not listened to the band at all. Even if they are not by-the-book rock, their short blasts of songs are very punk. The great thing about **We Jam Econo** is that since the songs are so short, the filmmakers can show an entire song. Each song is over quick enough that it keeps the pace of the documentary alive. You can't get bored with the Minutemen. There is no time.

The Minutemen story begins with thirteen-year-old Mike Watt walking in San Pedro when thirteen-year-old D Boon jumps out of a tree on him thinking Watt is someone else. The two begin talking and Watt thinks Boon is the smartest kid he has ever met. That is until Boon plays him the record where he stole all his material. The two develop a friendship and, encouraged by Boon's mother, they start a band.

The pre-Minutemen Reactionaries get their big break when they meet Black Flag, who tell them they will be playing a show in San Pedro. When they tell Black Flag they are also in a band, they get added to the show. Watt recalls that the show took place in a youth hall in a poorer part of San Pedro. The kids that came from out of town to see the show trash the place, breaking the toilets. The venue never has punk shows again.

The Reactionaries break up after this show. Boon and Watt reform the band without the drummer (George Hurley) and the singer as The Minutemen. The band plays a show, after which Greg Ginn asks them to record a record for SST. Their new drummer freaks out about the punks and quits the band. George Hurley is asked to play drums on the record and then joins the band full time. The record *Paranoid Time* is the second release for SST.

We Jam Econo features some great footage of the band playing live at different stages of their career. There is an interview with the band before they take off to play some shows with REM, which tells some of the history of the band. Mike Watt fills in the rest of the story. Although George Hurley is interviewed, there is unfortunately only a small part of his story in the film. I would have liked more. I already knew that *Double Nickels on the Dime* was made into a double album when the band heard that Hüsker Dü was doing a double album. What I didn't know (SPOILER WARNING) was that it was a concept album based on Pink Floyd's *Ummagumma* (on which each band member got to experiment on a side of a double album) and Sammy Hagar's *I Can't Drive 55*. As Watt comments, "We can drive 55. We get crazy with our music. Not our cars." Double nickels equals two fives or 55.

I find it odd that band documentaries seem to feel the need to feature celebrities in order to give bands like the Minutemen some sort of credibility in the scene. **We Jam Econo: The Story of the Minutemen** has some major and minor ones. Henry Rollins, Ian MacKaye, Colin Newman, Thurston Moore, Joe Baiza, Dez Cadena, Raymond Pettibon, Kira Roessler, and many more give testimony to the greatness of the Minutemen. The nice thing is that although each person's name appears on screen, his or her affiliation does not. If you don't know who these people are, it doesn't matter. I guess you have to believe them anyway. Or better yet, go out and discover the Minutemen's music for yourself. (www.theminutemen.com)

I wish I had never read the press release for **Derailroaded**, the documentary about Wildman Fischer. After seeing the film, I rode my bicycle home in the rain singing "Merry Go Round" with a smile on my face. Not only did I get to see Wildman Fischer on the screen in all his glory, but also I ran into one of my favorite musicians, Mr. California, and got to see the film with him. I was having a great night.

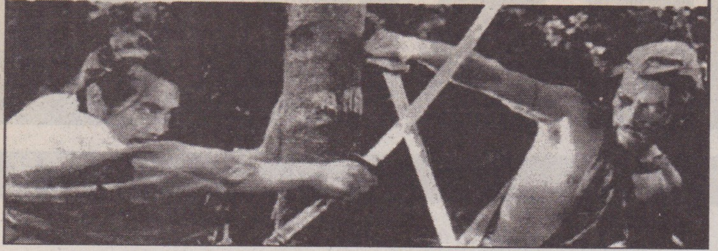
Then I read the director Josh Rubin's press release story of how the film came about. I remembered something another friend said after seeing **Derailroaded**. He told me that the trend of people making documentaries about "weird" singers just so they can gawk at how weird they are was annoying him. He mentioned that the Daniel Johnston documentary **The Devil and Daniel Johnston** was the same way. Then I read the story of how, inspired by the Geto Boys, Rubin and Producer Jeremy Lubin started a rap band in 1990 when they were in the seventh grade that poked fun at their unattractive female school bus driver. Sure, it was probably just stupid kids' stuff, but I am too skeptical to believe that people really change that much when they get older.

Eleven years later Rubin is introduced to Wildman Fischer on the street and doesn't believe what he is told about him because of the way Fischer looks. Rubin and Lubin manage to find a copy of Fischer's first LP *An Evening with Wildman Fischer* and they immediately set out to make a documentary about him. Not because the music meant much to them, but rather because of his life story. There are a lot of exploitative aspects of the documentary. While I enjoyed the early performances and the story of Fischer's musical career, there is also the issue of his mental illness and his strange family life. His personal life obviously has an effect on his music. If he hadn't been sent to a mental institution at age sixteen for allegedly threatening his mother with a knife, he would never have escaped from that institution. Then he wouldn't have been on the street singing songs for a dime and probably never would have met Frank Zappa. And so on.

Derailroaded tries to celebrate the music of Wildman Fischer, but cannot seem to avoid the easy *Behind the Music*-type storytelling. It may make for a more interesting film for people who couldn't care less about the music of Wildman Fischer. The general public *does* seem to love watching other people's tragic lives. Yet, those were not the people seeing the film with me. I assume from all the musicians and record collectors, they were there because of the music. I personally would have preferred to see a documentary that could possibly make people care more about Fischer's music instead of his crazy story. (www.derailroaded.com)

I am always looking for films to review. If you made one, send a copy to me c/o *MRR*, PO Box 406760, San Francisco, CA 94146-0760. Email me at carolynmrr@juno.com if you have a film screening in San Francisco. I will go see it.

FINAL CUT BY STEVEN SPINALI



HORROR BUSINESS II

It's spooky that I'm listening to an album by the Peanuts (the singing duo who play the tiny twins in **Mothra**) while trying to straighten out my feelings toward **Godzilla: Final Wars**. From the opening, which splashes "Toho-Scope" on the big screen to a montage of old Godzilla flicks, it's clear that this was meant to inspire nostalgia for a franchise that's fallen on hard times. Who needs guys in rubber suits smashing miniatures of Tokyo Harbor when even the most modest sci-fi flick has loads of fabulous computer-generated effects? Has Godzilla lost his ability to frighten and awe?

If this were the second **Godzilla vs. Mechagodzilla**, I'd say no. But it's clear that director Ryuhei Kitamura (**Versus**), who cut his teeth with cheapo indie action flicks, wants to bring Godzilla back to its lower-tech roots. The miniature sets look and fall apart like the rickety ones from the 60s, and the plot is a direct descendant from early-70s Godzilla scenarios. Nearly all the monsters (eleven in total) appear here, making this into a kind of über **Destroy All Monsters** cum martial arts extravaganza.

The plot is very basic. Without warning, a body-slam of monsters is wreaking havoc across the globe, destroying conspicuous landmarks like the Eiffel Tower, the Sydney Opera House, and various highlights of the New York skyline.

To the relief of the world's structural engineers, a flying saucer with benevolent (and vaguely effeminate) aliens appears in the sky. They put a stop to the chaos, and offer Earth a tantalizing carrot by including us in a world federation of planets. Might there be something suspicious in the timing? Few care to think about it.

When cute newscaster Maki Mizuno unmasks the lies on national TV, the new alien leader (Kazuki Kitamura) takes over. Wearing a shiny, form-fitting vinyl suit and given to fits of hissy giggling, he decides to teach Earth a lesson by waging total war. His goal: to enslave the world's population as a ready source of food for the meat-starved aliens, who call themselves Xians. As the destruction mounts, it's clear that there's only one solution: to unfreeze Godzilla at the South Pole and let him do our dirty work.

What follows is like a watching a World Wrestling Entertainment match with guys in rubber suits. Unlike the extended matches of years past, pissed-off Godzilla dispatches most of his opponents with one punch, tossing them on a giant reptilian compost heap. (But he doesn't do the Ali shuffle, like in **Godzilla vs. Monster Zero**.)

The earthlings should have it so easy. Even Japan's highly trained group of mutant human crime-busters, powered by the M-Force, falls prey to the aliens' telepathic powers. At one point, Kitamura actually says, "Your resistance is futile," which sent a ripple of giggles through the most dedicated sci-fi fans. At one point, Minilla (Baby Godzilla) actually drives a car. Always the dutiful son, the dutiful little monster wears a seat belt.

Godzilla: Final Wars rarely takes itself too seriously, and between the actor Kitamura's raging hissy fits and the bloated performance of the one American (the generally hopeless Don Frye), you wonder if the director has a clue.

While the reptiles are battling it out somewhere, Kitamura fixes the camera where he's most comfortable: filming hyperkinetic martial arts sequences. The fights are quite entertaining, but you soon realize that this is the first Godzilla film where the human fights take precedence over Godzilla's.

Godzilla: Final Wars is incredible fun in a packed theater of rabid fans that get all the references, but it's hard to figure how the untutored moviegoer will react. The whole Godzilla thing has long been marketed to the converted, and the CGI-powered American version was never embraced by the faithful. In a way, the series has fallen prey to its own fan base; the very people who love Japanese rubber-suited lizards won't tolerate revisions to the formula, but this formula probably won't be embraced by your average domestic movie fan. **Godzilla: Final Wars** doesn't have a US distributor yet, though I understand the DVD may just be out.

On the other hand, the publicity materials for **Evil Aliens** haven't yet seen ink, and it doesn't even have an official website yet. This may be one time when raving bloggers have beaten the mainstream press to a new cult classic. British Director Jake West has crafted an alien invasion film certain to eclipse the fun level of the upcoming **War of the Worlds**, and all without Steven Spielberg, Tom Cruise, or a bloated budget.

After an opening sequence that shows the anal probe to end all anal probes, the staff of a British UFO program travels to an isolated island off the Welsh coast. A hysterical woman claims she's had close encounter of the gruesome kind.

The mood changes when they see their first cattle mutilation. They find and kill a few aliens, putting one crucified body of a cross.

The resulting mayhem is like a cross between John Carpenter's **The Thing** and the no-holds-barred insanity of **Reanimator**. At every turn, the director goes one or two steps beyond what any other science fiction film would even dare.

Jake West includes allusions to **Aliens, Predator, The Watchman, Jaws, Humanoids from the Deep, Phantasm, The Thing, Evil Dead**, and maybe a hundred or so other films. So it's a miracle that **Evil Aliens** stands on its own—even if you don't get all the jokes.

Evil Aliens is so new that it hasn't even been seen by its cast and crew yet. That gives you plenty of time to write out the title in your reminder book and wait for the release.

You'll hear about it, trust me.

The concept behind **Save the Green Planet**, the mind-bending debut feature by South Korean director Jang Jun-Iwan, is presented early on. The film's anti-hero, beekeeper Lee Byong-yu, earnestly tells his girlfriend the facts of life: Earth is in great danger. Rich industrialist Kang Man-shik is an alien from the Andromeda galaxy, and plans to take control of the planet's fate at the next solar eclipse. It's part of a plot begun millions of years ago with the dinosaurs (who were destroyed, not by a meteor, but by the aliens), and continued when the extraterrestrials monkeyed around with human DNA. But the aliens screwed up, which is mainly why the world is kind of screwed up. The beekeeper reasons that the only solution is for him to kidnap and incapacitate their leader.

From here, **Save the Green Planet** launches into a gruesomely funny joyride through a maze of alternative history, UFO lore (everything from abductions to the "space brothers" hypothesis), and science fiction (quoting from **Brazil, 12 Monkeys, 2001**, and **The Andromeda Strain**). It's one of the hippest plots in recent years.

The couple manages to kidnap the rich industrialist, shackle him in the basement, and shave his head. (Alien hair, you see, is their antennae.) The film's sadistic streak emerges as the couple tries to shock their captive into reality (or at least *their* reality), and that means electrocution, discipline with hot irons, and breaking his limbs (at first, Lee considers and cutting a foot off with a hatchet). They almost get around to slathering a makeshift metal dildo with KY jelly and, well.... Kang got off easy on that one.

Their dog is hardly a Cujo (another clever film quote), but lives on a diet of meat from Lee's unfortunate victims. And when a former cop finds a human thighbone (and skull) in the doghouse, it's hard to judge just how many people may have fallen prey to the wacko UFO-logist.

The movie would be easy to dismiss if it weren't so smart, or took such great care in researching the most obscure conspiracy theories on the planet. The final expository moments of the film almost impossibly compress interplanetary history with South Korea's bloody road to modernity—both stories containing their share of conflagration and human tragedy.

If you're willing to be entertained and challenged, **Save the Green Planet** delivers the whole package so impressively that you forget it only took $3 million to make. This restored my faith in feature filmmaking.

RECORDS

Please send your ***punk*** records to **MRR, PO Box 460760, SF, CA 94146, USA**. We will review everything that fall within our area of coverage. Include post-paid price and contact information when mailing. Let us know where your band is from! Please send two copies if possible (one for the MRR library, one for the reviewer). We will review CDs, but just CD-only releases. If on vinyl and CD format, please send us the **vinyl**. Send demo tapes and CD-R-only releases to Erin Yanke, PO Box 1113, Portland, OR 97207. *No reviews of test pressings or promo CDs without final artwork.*

Reviewers: (TB) Tim Brooks, (MC) Mitch Cardwell, (RC) Rob Coons, (CC) Carl Cordova, (PC) Paul Curran, (JD) Jip Daems, (AD) Andy Darling, (DD) Dr. Dante, (SD) Sean Dougan, (JF) Jonathan Floyd, (JH) Jeff Heermann, (VH) Vince Horner, (CS) Chris Hubbard, (KK) Kenny Kaos, (CK) Carolyn Keddy, (RK) Ramsey Kanaan, (WK) Will Kinser, (WL) Will Weber Kneitel, (EL) Elliott Lange, (RL) Ray Lujan, (HM) Hal MacLean, (AM) Allan McNaughton, (GN) Golnar Nikpour, (BR) Bruce Roehrs, (MS) Martin Sorrondeguy, (SS) Steve Spinali, (BS) Brian Stern, (RW) Ryan Wells, (SW) Shane White.

THE ABRASIVES – "It Starts Tonight" CD

Mediocre, politically motivated street punk with a tinny snare drum and too-simple guitar parts. Now, I know that writing punk songs isn't rocket science, but this is about as 2+2=4 as it gets. Anyway, I appreciate the politics of this band; they just don't have the tunes to back them up. (GN)
(www.theabrasives.com)

ACHILLES – "The Dark Horse" CD

ACHILLES, from Rochester, New York, plays mid-tempo metalcore that is slightly chaotic and technical, without losing its direction in solos that are too thought out or rhythms that are too weird or incoherent. The songwriting is pretty good and the vocals keep the music together nicely. The lyrics are mostly personal, but also address the power of corporations over human life (as in the song "Ivory"). Lovers of metalcore should pay attention and pick this up. (JD)
(Hex, 210 Maple Ln, North Syracuse, NY 13212, www.hanginghex.com)

ALL SYSTEMS FAIL/WHAT IF GODS LIE – split CD

WHAT IF GODS LIE starts this CD off with a mid-tempo rager that kind of reminds me of a rougher version of VICTIMS from Sweden. The songs are undeniably good, with a nice balance between songs sung in Spanish and English. I would place their sound somewhere between Swedish crust and more straightforward punk. ALL SYSTEMS FAIL, from Utah, plays a similar style to their partners in crime on this split, but with more of a heavy emphasis on the Swedish crust sound then the old punk rock. Again, the lyrics are in both Spanish and English, which makes this a good listen for either side of the Americas, or elsewhere. Both bands' lyrics (that I can understand) deal with politics in an easily understandable manner, which is to say that there aren't a lot of indirect implications from either band. Good stuff. (WK)
(Hysterical, c/o Nalley Rodriguez, AP 89-058 CP 09201, MEXICO)

ALTERCADO – "El Ruido y la Rabia" LP

ALTERCADO is from Chile and has been around for a few years now, though this is their first full-length vinyl release. There are some great songs here with excellent lyrics and spirit. This is definitely politically-motivated punk. They experiment with a few different styles of hardcore, mixing it up a bit but still delivering a few powerful fast ones with enough force and anger to get you jumping up and down. Nice gatefold sleeve and art *a la* 60s protest records from Latin America, and the liners include a bit of writing about the Mapuche (indigenous people) struggle in Chile. *Buen trabajo, ala mierda con el regimen militar y la globalizacion!* (MS)
(Les Nains Aussi, c/o Nicolas Retiere, 3 allee des Jonquilles, 44830, Bouaye, FRANCE)

AMATEUR PARTY – "Sounds and Halls to House Them" CD

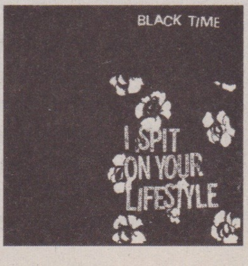
Philadelphia's AMATEUR PARTY is two times ex-KILL THE MAN WHO QUESTIONS, but you definitely would not know it from listening. Their sound is angular and modest, combining elements of WIRE and FUGAZI (reminds me most of *Repeater*-era), but not really sounding like either. Their songs are mostly rhythm-based, settling on a groove. It's very minimal sounding—just bass, drums, clean guitar, and vocals. It has a pretty good feel too it. (WL)
(Cheap Art, PO Box 2101, Philadelphia, 19103, www.cheap-art.com)

THE AMBER JETS – "Swimming Lake Superior" CD

One thing that draws me to a pop punk band besides the presumed catchy tunes and solid guitar riffs is great vocals. This is what puts bands like the DESCENDENTS and the ATARIS at the top of my pop heap. This band has great vocals provided by the ex-vocalist of SERPICO and DARIEN circa the 90s. Although this has its touches of rockness, this band dishes out the pop punk shit. Fans of good ALL will dig this. (RL)
($10 ppd: Records, c/o John Telenko, 25 Charles St., South River, NJ 08882, www.theamberjets.com)

BANG! BANG! – "Electric Sex" CD

A mix of dance punk *a la* the RAPTURE and GANG OF FOUR and the rock side of LE TIGRE. Decent stuff but nothing that stands out in the new wave of "post punk." (RL)



(Morphius, www.bangbangband.com)

THE BECAUSE / THE DAUNTLESS ELITE – split EP

Another in the series of Snuffy Smile splits between one Japanese and one American band comes a split between Japan's the BECAUSE and United States' DAUNTLESS ELITE. The BECAUSE writes songs which sound JAWBREAKER/CRIMPSHRINE-ish in the way that Arkansas' RED 40 did, but the vocals sound dead on like AGAINST ME! when they are strained. Basically, decent emo songs with not a ton of production, which is a plus. Words are sung in fractured English. DAUNTLESS ELITE is similar, having more of a LEATHERFACE or SWINGIN' UTTERS vibe going on—very growly, thick-necked, and melodic with lots of guitar leads and some good hooks. Their songs are a little more produced. (WL)

(Snuffy Smile, 4-1-16-201 Daita, Setagaya-Ku, Tokyo 155-0033, JAPAN)

BLACK SUNDAY – "Tronic Blanc" CD

BLACK SUNDAY is Alicja of LOST SOUNDS' one-woman-band/recording project. It's super fuzzy, reverb-y pop. Kinda shoegazer meets garage meets the RONDELLES. As with most of the LOST SOUNDS-related stuff, I think the songs get lost (no pun intended) in the recording style too much. Still, this is by far the best thing I've heard from that gang. I love the pure bubblegum pop that underlies all the gothy, keyboard-y, distorted weirdness. Worth checking out. (PC)

(Dirtnap, www.dirtnaprecs.com)

BLOOD SPIT NIGHTS – "Despot Butchery" 12"

Monotonous Japanese-influenced hardcore out of Portland. This 12" EP features seven songs with heavily reverbed vocals and layers of distortion over repetitive and mind-numbingly simple guitar riffs. Still sound a little too sophisticated for your tastes? Well the lyrics are near meaningless sentence fragments in broken English. If it took more than half a day to conceptualize and write this entire record, then these guys should be proud, cuz they make it look *real* easy. (CS)

(Hardcore Holocaust, www.hardcoreholocaust.com)

BLACK TIME – "I Spit on Your Lifestyle" EP

They're not the ELECTRIC EELS, but they sure wanna be. BLACK TIME's EP is recorded under as primitive, caveman-ish conditions as that seminal 70s Cleveland group's records, and can't earn *classic* or *godlike* status simply because they're at the game 30 years after the fact. That doesn't mean it isn't good noise: the title track and B-side offerings "Police State" and "Rocket Rumble" are almost perfect in their autistic focus, repeating their head-splitting choruses again and again with the reliability of water torture or the grinding of poorly-maintained machinery. Neat. Will we see and hear more from BLACK TIME, or was this EP the sound of their birth and death? Fantastic, yes. (JH)

(Shake Your Ass, www.syarecords.it)

BLOWTOPS – "Mad Monk Medication" EP

They do not sound like a band called the BLOWTOPS: rather than the expected pop-punk hybrid, we've got muscle-bound lurching with screams, fancy guitar picking, and the wheezes of exhausted lungs. All four tracks have a scarcely-concealed VICTIMS FAMILY/BARFEEDERS quality that isn't exactly bowling me over; call it speedy tempos overlaid with high-intensity rapping, unexpected time changes. Members of the LOST SOUNDS had their hands in this EP's production, which suits the band's quirkier moments—but I can't shake the unpleasant MR. BUNGLE vibe that's raising the hairs on my arms. Manic progressive metal complexity. *Eh.* (JH)

(Big Neck, www.bigneckrecords.com)

THE BODY / GET KILLED – split EP

GET KILLED pounds out three intense tracks of modern day youth crew hardcore. It's fast, ferocious, and to the point. The BODY slows things down with the brooding, bass-heavy devastation of their one track "This Is Disease." I'm not sure why, but the two bands' vastly different sounds seem to work really well together (maybe it's just the nice packaging…), making for a great split. (VH)

(Corleone, PO Box 65, Providence, RI 02901)

BOSTON X – "Boston X" EP

I'm not sure how seriously I am supposed to take this. Apparently this record is not for sale, and can only be obtained with the HAMMER BROS. pre-order. The one sheet that came in the record states that this is an anonymous side project done by members of well-known Boston straight edge bands, yet the music is not very good, and the lyrics are awful. There aren't that many well-known straight edge Boston bands around today, and that leads me to believe that this might be a joke. Here's a lyrical nugget for you to chew on: "Hangin' with kids at Posi-fest/You got your home grown monkeys banging on their chests/And the skinny kids at a buck 'o five/Kung-Fu fight to keep the 'core alive." (CC)

(www.str8ntrue.com)

BRUTAL DEATH / SKRUPEL – split EP

Pursue your exit from mortal existence by way of BRUTAL DEATH. Six face peeling, intestine-slurping decapitators from these young masters of grind. SKRUPEL's scalpel cuts with equal precision and absolutely will not disappoint. Great, pummeling grind; pimply and clear skinned grind aficionados: this is a must. (BS)

(RSR c/o Sandro Gessner, Strasse des Friedens 45, 07819 Mittelpoellnitz, GERMANY)

BRUTALLY FRANK – "She'll Bleed" EP

BRUTALLY FRANK follows up their CD with a solid single; they don't stray from their fun-loving psychobilly. "Angel in a Nightmare" and "Murder Crazy Cannibals" bring the right element to the BRUTALLY FUCKING FRANK experience. A solid record. (HM)

(Wee Rock, PO Box 333, Springfield, MO 65801, www.werockrecords.com)

CASH MATTOCK – "Sexy 21st Century Sleaze" CD

Completely straight-up mid-90s-style indie rock, coming off like a RFTC side project that only the completists would snatch up. This is not something that you dear readers are ever going to want to track down; it's so radio-friendly it practically comes with a set of promo kneepads, but if you are a regular visitor to the Pitchfork web site, hey, here's a hot new band for you!!! Punk is so 1995!!! (RW)

(Cash Mattock, PO Box 149, E. Rochester, NY 14445)

CASKET LIFE – "The Good Times Are Killing Me" CD

These chaps manage to combine straight ahead pile-driving punk (think non-metallic POISON IDEA) with the tough-guy mannerisms/vocal bark of the likes of SICK OF IT ALL. And bugger me, it works. At their best, they come across as a heavy-handed DILLINGER FOUR. (RK)

(Stomping Ground, www.stompinggroundrecords.com)

CLOROX GIRLS – "This Dimension / Animal Eyes"

Looks like we got ourselves a motherfucking test pressing here, kiddies. Lucky for us, 'cause this kicks some serious ass. It's nothing fancy, but if you're into straightforward, energetic punk rock, then you'll need to rush out and grab this new CLOROX GIRLS single. It's got one original and one cover, a DEFENDERS original. (Thanks to the band for pointing that out, as I must admit I would not have known.) The original even has a built-in hiccup at the end. How cool is that? It looks like it's limited to 200, so if you want one, you better hurry. I only wish I knew where to send you. (KK)

(Jonny Cat)

CLUSTERFUX / THE LAST PRIORITY – split EP

CLUSTERFUX plays straightforward punk with a big speed-metal drum overtone, kind of like the EXPLOITED *Beat the Bastards* record. The vocals actually remind me of KYLESA on some of more psychedelic parts, but they are definitely more punk. They manage to keep it interesting with a lot of changes. The LAST PRIORITY plays punk *a la* Charged Records, spiky hair and a youthful sounding vocal attack with gang backups. I like the energy and the raw punk sound. Good job. Unfortunately this record has to have some of the worst art I have ever seen, especially the CLUSTERFUX cover. I guess that is why it's on a label called Less Art. How about no art, this record would have looked better with just the band names and nothing else. Why spend all the time to record something when you're gonna package it in shit? Oh well. (WK)

(Less Art, PO Box 16328, Golden, CO 80401)

CONDOR – "Do It Everywhere" CD

Another of the new breed of ambient indie-prog that is hard-charging through the ranks of college radio. The influences here are 50 percent BRIAN ENO, 50 percent ALAN PARSONS PROJECT, 50 percent second- album LE TIGRE, and the rest is pure Jade Tree label circa Y2K. The last track even takes an effortless stab at clockwork krautrock without directly referencing ASH RA TEMPEL (or whatever) with any specificity. Overall, it's not bad at all, very sincere and propulsive and derivative, and ultimately just not my brand of dance musik. (RW)

(Birds Go South, 43 Linda St., San Francisco, CA 94110)

COQUETTISH – "High Energy Politics" CD

You gotta love a band that thanks, first and foremost, their wives. As it should be. They also claim to be Ninja, not Geisha. They are Japanese, so they should know, I guess. They also thank, repeatedly, the SUICIDE MACHINES, and they're certainly a pretty good representation of their sound and attitude. Pissed punk, mixed up with ska, and angry lyrics (which sound weird and stilted, and read even worse, but I'm guessing they don't translate too well). Decent enough, for folks that dig the whole SUICIDE MACHINES/AGAINST ALL AUTHORITY axis of the punk/ska thang. (RK)

(Asian Man, www.asianmanrecords.com)

COUGHING UP BLOOD – "Copstache" EP

Stop and go fast, fast, fast hardcore stuff—they do youth crew back- ups but the rest is just fast. COUGHING UP BLOOD does not have the most exciting sound. The cover art is a cool drawing with kids wearing GAUZE and INFEST shirts beating on a cop but this band does not sound like either of these two bands. How deceiving. (MS)

(Coughing Up, 9276 S. Myrtle Ave. Tempe, AZ 85284)

COUNTRY TEASERS – "Live Album" CD

Okay, neophytes portion of the review first: the COUNTRY TEASERS are a gaggle of Scots who are basically (sic) channeling the sonic pummel of prime Rough Trade-era FALL into the 21st century, that's circa 1979-81. That means loose-to-very-loose, jangle-scratch, arch-bored-voxed rock that hangs the rags of late 70s punk onto a very pointy-limbed skeleton. Can you imagine that bar drunk you've always dismissed out of hand suddenly breaking loose with a burst of talent that leaves you gasping at their insight? Well, that's the TEASERS in a nutshell. Lazy, fantastic, occasionally tedious—a real unvarnished slice of life. They've been at it since the mid-90s. Previous convert portion of review: it's a live odds 'n' sods from the late 90s to 2004, and a very much you-are-there disc. When "Black Change" charges out you will immediately remember why these guys can be one of the best live experiences on the planet, a pure adrenaline thrill mixed with that nagging annoyance at why they can't reproduce that feeling at will. Hey, that's what drug addiction is for boyo, real life is about waitin' for it. Like the FALL, they whip out covers that look bad on paper but kill on stage: BUTTHOLE SURFERS' "Moving to Florida," BRAINBOMBS' "Obey," etc. I thought their 2004 SF show was gear fab, but there is a significant slice of their Tucson show from that tour on this instead. A reason to move to Tucson for one night, anyway. This was originally supposed to be on vinyl, so now I am reduced to begging for someone to blow their wad on pressing it up, and someone really should, 'cause as sloppy as this gets it's a real rock 'n roll monster. Is Skydog still around? (RW)

(In The Red, PO Box 50777, Los Angeles, CA 90050)

CTR – "Kuruizaki Attack" EP

Twisted punk from the land of the rising sun played by a bunch of clowns. The music is pretty unremarkable, stop-start punk rock with some rousing choruses, but the vocals?? What the fuck—is this a joke? Like a super gruff Frank Discussion from the FEEDERZ, but totally unintelligible and really bad. Next. (TB)

(HG Fact 105 Nakano Shinbashi-M, 2-7-15 Yayoi-Cho, Nanko, Yokyo, 164-0013, JAPAN)

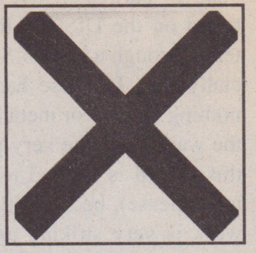
THE CREEPS – "Back to the 'Bin" CD

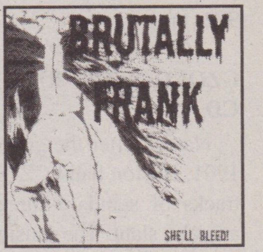
A decent attempt to recreate the first three RAMONES LPs. The CREEPS ain't no QUEERS or SCREECHING WEASEL, but they do the basics well. A creditable release—not so sure what's up with the decapitation on the front cover, but, er, there you go. Mebbe it's just a Canadian thing and I don't understand it. (RK)

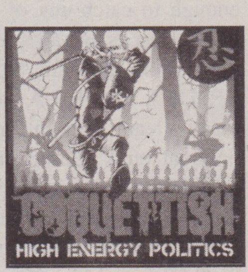
(Goblin, www.creeps.ca)

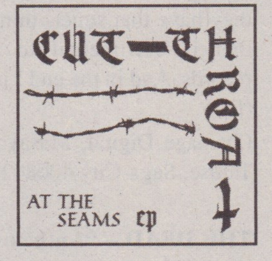
CUT-THROAT – "At the Seams" EP

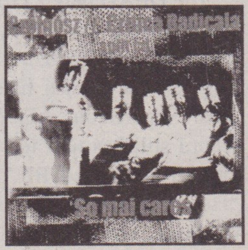
From Portland, featuring members of blah, blah, and blah. OK, now that I've gotten that out of the way, I can actually do some reviewing. For those of us who picked up (and enjoyed) the CUT-THROAT 12" on Partners in Crime a couple of months back, this EP showcases a remarkable improvement over that record. As if to prove a point, I saw this band right about the time of that first release and then again last week, and while they were good the first time around, they were fucking excellent their latest time through. It's cool when a band goes from being a band you like to a band you're really excited about. CUT-THROAT plays raw, aggressive hardcore punk that borrows heavily from its peers in Osaka and,











uh, Portland. They don't remind me of any one band in particular, but their sound is clearly based on the DISCHARGE model and is filtered through a love of Scandinavian and especially raw, Japanese hardcore punk. There is nothing chunky or metallic about this band, by the way—they are very punk. It's too bad that this record is limited to 500 (it's their Japan tour release), because it's a real treat. The artwork is very striking as well—stark, simple, and very effective. (GN)
(Cut-Throat, PO Box 11787, Portland, OR 97211)

CZOLGOSZ / CRITICA RADIALA – split CD

Named after the guy who shot McKinley in 1901, Boston band CZOLGOSZ dishes out six tracks of standard three-chord punk with an anarcho slant. The music couldn't be any more average. If for some reason you listen long enough to catch any of the lyrics, you'll find they're just as average—songs about the police, oppression, the state, hippies, etc. Moving on, CRITICA RADIALA from Craiova, Romania plays clean, straightforward, mid-80s style political punk. Based on the English translations in the booklet, the lyrics are exceptionally well-written and intelligent. Overall these seven songs are pretty cool, but the vocals on a few of the tracks totally ruin the whole thing for me. The guy actually sings, and it's just too dramatic for me. (VH)
(www.czolgosz.com)

DAMAGE DIGITAL – "Moss" LP

Ten songs of crazed Japanese grindcore from a band that I had never heard before. A variety of tempos are utilized here, but it is mostly thrown at you with the hammer down. Two vocalists battle with contrasting styles of deep growls and screechy yelps. Unfortunately, they have that super- thin/thumpy drum sound that is detrimental to so many grindcore records. And in the end I just wasn't that into it. (RC)
(Damage Digital, Masayoshi Ichinose, 4-16-2 Tafuse, Saga-City 400842 JAPAN)

THE DEAD – "Anthems to World Domination" CD

The DEAD play 23 tracks of well-produced, fast hardcore with raspy, guttural vocals. The music is pretty good, but I have a hard time getting past the trucker hats and nautical star tattoos. Superfluous MTV2 fashion aside, this record still has *way* too many movie samples, and an uninspired BEASTIE BOYS cover of "Heartattack Man." I'll pass. (CC)
(Ratpack, Von Steuben Str. 17, 48143 Munster, GERMANY, www.greenhell.de)

THE DIRTBOMBS – "If You Don't Already Have a Look" CD

An amazing and awe-inspiring collection of singles from the DIRTBOMBS, which is nicely divided up into two CDs, the originals and the covers, totaling 52 wonderful tracks. Every song on this collection is great. There are no songs I wouldn't want to hear, whether it is an original like "Stuck Under My Shoe," "Cedar Point '76," "Tina Louise," or "Sharpest Claws," or any of the wide-ranging covers of CHEATER SLICKS, ELLIOTT SMITH, BEE GEES, or FLIPPER. Mick Collins confesses in the liner notes that his "original idea for the DIRTBOMBS was to make 15 seven-inch, four-song EPs, and then quit and move onto something else." Fortunately, he didn't stick to that idea; ten years later the DIRTBOMBS have amassed so many great songs. If you haven't been an avid collector of DIRTBOMBS records, here is your chance to catch up. If you have, the CD also includes some unreleased tunes. Either way you win. (CK)
(In The Red, PO Box 50777, Los Angeles, CA 90050)

DISCLOSE – "Apocalypse of Death" EP

God, does a month go by that I *don't* review a DISCLOSE record? I guess I could have it worse—I could be the go-to AGATHOCLES person. Thank goodness for small favors. Anyway, this is actually a 7" reissue of a 12" released by Dan-Doh two or so years ago. It was the first record in this band's shift to their "Disbones" style, and is really fucking excellent. I have to say, I would be happy to see the best of DISCLOSE's material stay perpetually in print, and that would include this record, the *Nightmare or Reality* 12", the *Neverending War* EP, and the *Mass of Raw Sound Assault* EP. For those living under a rock or lacking the ability to put two and two together, DISCLOSE's music is pretty much straight DISCHARGE worship taken to the next level through an above-average love of unmitigated distortion. Despite their intense dedication to the genre, DISCLOSE are not at all generic—after over a decade of playing together and a zillion records, they still stand head and shoulders above most Dis-clones. If you missed out on the hard-to-find vinyl the first time around, RSR has given you another chance. The *MRR* copy came on white vinyl, so get to it, nerds! (GN)
(RSR, Str. Des Friedens 45, 07819 Mittelpoellnitz, GERMANY)

DISENGAGE – "Application for an Afterlife" CD

Third full-length from this Cleveland band, who has been around for a decade or so. It's very rock, almost like TOOL, though in places it reminded me a little of ALICE DONUT. Not really my scene, but it's well played with decent lyrics. It's all very professional looking and sounding I must say. (AD)
(Fractured Transmitter, PO Box 33518, Cleveland, OH 44133)

DISSIMILARS – "Jimmy's Room" EP

A band terminally at odds with their environment—in this case, the mellow and temperate climes of San Diego. Spare and ugly shenanigans from this four-piece that claims Jimmy the Worm and Nate Red among its ranks. Sonically, they're a hyped-up blend of early REATARDS and snotty stuff like the early QUEERS or what have you. Six tracks of wind-up bedroom tapes that all sorta sound the same, but they've that elusive Quality X that says "keep" rather than "toss." Tunes include "Black Cat," "Statue Man," "Human Target," "Santee Duplex," "Bury Me With My Record Collection," and "Monkey Farm" (being the best of the bunch). If you're looking for an illicit Memphis-style buzz right here in cosmopolitan California, then the DISSIMILARS could be your act. (JH)
(Out of Order, PO Box 72775, Davis, CA 95617, www.outoforderrecords.com)

DOG SOLDIER – "Barking of the Dogs of War" 12"

From the song "STD": "SS Hookers for the rich spreading their Disease/Police and Terror, the mouth and anus, the same whore/Fucking us, bleeding us dry till we're spent." If you don't like those lyrics, or are offended by them, you probably won't like this record. Former members of BLOOD SPIT NIGHTS pump out the punk rock jams with a slight BROKEN BONES feel. Not unlike their previous band you get nice raw GISM sound, accompanied by some deeper yelled vocals. You want humor? Just read the letter from an angry neighbor about the band and their punk rock party habits. Solid Gold. (WK)
(Hardcore Holocaust, www.hardcoreholocaust.com)

DUMB HAIRCUTS / ETHAN – split EP

This takes me back to the days of the Epicenter record store here in San Francisco, or to be more specific, its humungous 25¢ seven-inch record bin… DIY split single with intentionally bad artwork and wacky band names. Actually ETHAN isn't a band but a person, a "one man band" if you will. He plays the Hawaiian ukulele and sings. It really rocks. DUMB HAIRCUTS are your typical, nerdy, scrappy, pop-punk band *a la* 1995. They turn in a whopping five tracks on their side on this vinyl wonder. They're song titles are "Porcupine Ghost in a Box," "321 Birthday,"

"Goblet Full of Drool," "Screamy in the Clouds," and "Orange Marker." Thank god there's not a draft. (AD)
(no address)

EYE FOR AN EYE – "Dystans" LP

Fantastic LP from the one of the best new Polish bands. If you dig the femme-fronted punk vibe of POST REGIMENT but fancy something a little harder, then EYE FOR AN EYE will be right up your alley, As with POST REGIMENT the lyrics are all in Polish which gives them real individuality in the sea of US-inspired mediocrity. This fucking rules! (TB)
(www.punkinfinland.net/kamanen)

FALCON CREST – "Taste the Thunder Raise the Flag" CD

Some rocking stuff here that sounds like it would be right at home on early 90s AmRep. There was a time when this type of band was all the rage, and a billion bands sounded like they wanted to be on the next *Dope, Guns, and Fucking in the Streets* comp. Well, FALCON CREST would fit in perfectly with those bands, but since they are doing it a decade later, they stand out as one of those bands that sound fresh by doing something old. (JF)
(Not Bad World Industries, www.notbadrecords.com)

FATALS – "Yeah Baby!" EP

Delightfully fucked-up and constantly threatening to get out of control, this disc would sound very much at home on In The Red at the more diamond-hard rock and roll end of their wonderful spectrum (though a little bit of unrepentantly irreverent doom blues rears its beastly head in "If You Don't Like Me"). Definitely a band to note, so take note. (DD)
(Zaxxon Virile Action, www.zaxxonvirileaction.com)

FLEAS AND LICE – "Early Years" CD

Along with a CD reissue of their *Recipes for Catastrophes* LP, Dutch crust punk heroes FLEAS AND LICE return with this twenty-track compilation that includes their 1993 *Parasites* EP, their '94 split LP with BLEEDING RECTUM, the *Global Destruction* 12", and their split EP with ASSRASH from '95. (VH)
(Rodent Popsicle, PO Box 1143, Allston, MA 02134)

FLEAS AND LICE – "Recipes for Catastrophes" CD

What can be said about FLEAS AND LICE that hasn't been said before? This is a CD reissue of their classic first LP, which was originally released on Skuld. Description: 100% pure two-fingers-in-the-air punk rock played in the tradition of a ton of dirty squatting UK bands. Fast, snotty, and catchy, just the way it should be. Lyrics deal with socio-political issues, drinkin', pain, punk, and cops, with loads of sarcasm and underlying politics through out. What can I say? Hmm, straightforward punk genius from these Dutch bastards. See them live in the USA this summer. (WK)
(Rodent Popsicle, www.rodentpopcicle.com)

FRIED CHINESE DONALDS – "Declaration of Dependence" CD

FRIED CHINESE DONALDS belts out some strong riffs and heavy rock grooves with solid vocals. I keep hearing AC/DC, BTO, SMASHING PUMPKINS, and HÜSKER DÜ influences, but these guys compose some solid original songs. Funny how their song "Husker Du's and Husker Dont's" has the most blatant mix of BTO and HÜSKER DÜ. A really good CD. (HM)
(Spastics, PO Box 42 Negaunee, MI, 49866, www.spasticsrecords.com)

FUBAR – "Justification of Criminal Behaviour" LP

Holland's FUBAR bring us 21 blistering tracks of ultra-fast hardcore that brings to mind the brutality of SPAZZ and those early Slap-a-Ham records. Energetic and intense, this is definitely one of the better records of this genre I've heard in the past couple months. (VH)
(Axel Brandt, Pf 1219, 14963 Ludwigsfelde, GERMANY)

THE FUGUE – "Mysterious Animals" CD

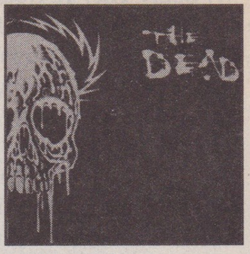
I expected some extreme musical nerd prowess from these folks, I mean their name is THE FUGUE. Music camp nerds, or Bach listeners out there? Anyhoo, as it turns out *Mysterious Animals* is an amalgamation of rhythm guitar oriented mid-90s indie, GANG OF FOUR, and DC influenced post hardcore; AKA arty-pants-core. It's got an aftertaste like SHELLAC, but going down the rhythm hooks don't have that grit. They come off sounding too generalized and overly simplified. Progressions and time changes remind me of THE CONVOCATION OF… with a somewhat similar vocal approach, though not as unique and dead-on as that band. (BS)
(RIYL, www.riylrecords.com)

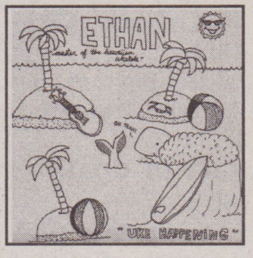
FUNCTIONAL BLACKOUTS – "Raw Dawg, Raw Deal" EP

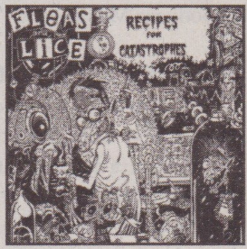
The "new-look" FUNCTIONAL BLACKOUTS pounce on the old version, simple as that. The yelping, screeching savagery showcased here is just as chilling as their LP was, but this might even be (gulp) too noisy! "Chemical Bath" stands out as the winner with it's intermittent shouting and flailing sax skronk. I'm nearly positive that these guys craft the best "long songs" (three min+) in punk rock today. Put all sharp objects away before spinning. (MC)
(Wrench, BCM Box 4049, London WC1N 3XX, UNITED KINGDOM)

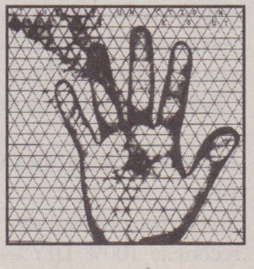
FUSES – "Eastern Cities" LP

Supposing it's possible, one could color me consistently surprised by this Baltimore band. Their last single did not leave my brain for months, and this LP shows signs of being twice as potent. Following in the direction of that single, they seem to have refined most of that UK choppy post-punk influence that made up so much of their early sound into a fantastic pop-post-punk hybrid. While I'm sure the majority of the accolades will go to the PONYS this month as the smart-pop prime purchase, I simply gotta go with FUSES. They beat 'em at their own game this time around. (MC)
(Shit Sandwich, 3107 N. Rockwell, Chicago, IL 60618, www.shitsandwichrecords.com)









THE FUZZTONES – "Lord Have Mercy on My Soul / They're Gonna Take You Away"

Fuck, how old is Rudi Protrudi? The age is definitely showing on the totally unforgettable A-side: yawn inspiring faceless roadhouse rock. The flip, however, takes us all the way back to the early 80s spirit of their classic *Creatures That Time Forgot*, drenched in that eerie, comic book fuzz vibe that, along with the CRAMPS, they totally mastered. Now please somebody slap ol' Granddad Protrudi and tell him to leave the white trucker shit to all those big, fat, mullet-sporting, no-teethed speed freaks. (SD)
(Twist, Rue De Marais, Vale, Guernsey, Channel Islands, GY6 8AZ, UNITED KINGDOM, twist@cionine.com)

GENE DEFCON – "Throw Up And Die" CD

Wacky lo-fi techno stuff a la DEVO, ATOM & HIS PACKAGE, and GRAVY TRAIN. Goofy lyrics with many a political and punk rock reference. Catchy poppy tunes to boot. (RL)
(Retard Disco, PO Box 461163, Los Angeles, CA90046, www.retarddisco.com)

GIFT OF GOATS – "All I Think About..." EP

Sacramento's GIFT OF GOATS delivers four tracks of noisy, discordant art-punk. I'm not sure if it's intentional, but I'm definitely picking up elements of the early 90s Gravity Records sound. It's loud. It's spastic. It sounds good. It's worth checking out. (VH)
(Omnibus, PO Box 16-2372, Sacramento, CA 95816)

GOOD YEAR – "In Under 10 Minutes" CD

Generic pop punk with some mediocre ska influences thrown in. Trying to point out the positives, at least it is under ten minutes. (JF)
(Goodyear Music)

HAMMER BROS – "II" EP

I cannot tell you much about this band, as there's next to no info on them in the record. How about a lyric sheet HAMMER BROS, I am interested in what you are about. OK, so I will have to go on the sound alone. This EP features hardcore with lots of metallic chugga, chugga influence. There is also a song with a ridiculously long and horrible guitar solo. If you are into the contemporary metal/NYC stuff you may dig it. (MS)
(FNS, www.fnsboston.net)

HANGOVER HEARTATTACK – "Unhinge" EP

The back of *Unhinge* informs me that, "This record is 100% DIY"—it was even recorded and mixed at "home" in early 2005. Cheers to that, of course. OK, first things first. For a band whose name makes a later-POISON IDEA reference, they are not very hard-rockin'. In fact, they don't sound at all like any era of POISON IDEA. I wish they did. For the most part, HANGOVER HEARTATTACK plays thrashing hardcore that borders on (and sometimes spills into) grind territory. There are a couple of mid-tempo moments, which totally stick out in a good way. Other than that, there's not much to hold onto. Their lyrics are kind of a mess—drugs, mutilated lambs, and "rabid police dogs fucking in a piss soaked alleyway" all make an appearance—and the vocalist's monotonous shrieking is a bit much over the course of the EP. Nope. (GN)
(Force Fed, hangoverheartattack@yahoo.com)

HANK JONES – "Saturdays of Thunder" CD

Awkward, melodic hardcore here from HANK JONES. They have a modern sound like that of BANE or SUICIDE FILE, including elements of older bands like CHAIN OF STRENGTH and CRO-MAGS, but fail to bring the glory. Their themes range from standard hardcore anthem ("Get Pissed"), unfortunately named songs about serious shit ("Preaching to the Choir of Molested Boys"), to the great unifier—man's favorite food ("Pizza Party"). They get points for pushing the pizza agenda, but that's about it. (WL)
(Undecided, www.undecidedrecords.com)

THE HATEPINKS / SHAKIN NASTIES – split EP

The Frenchies are back. The HATEPINKS put out a 7" (split?) a short while back on Lollipop Records that just kicked my ass. The goods news is that they haven't slacked off any; this one is equally as good. (There is no bad news, in case you were wondering.) They blend a very cool combination of punk and early new wave. It's got a BRIEFS sound to it, maybe because they sound as if they're actually enjoying themselves. SHAKIN NASTIES delivers a couple of '77-style gems that sound as if they could have been put out on Chiswick Records way back then. It's tough to decide which side I like better. A great record with a very cool sleeve. (KK)
(Relax-o-matic, 13 Rue Terrusse, 13005 Marseille, FRANCE, www.relaxomatic.free.fr)

HELLSHOCK – "World Darkness" EP

HELLSHOCK is back with another dose of 80s metallic crust. This is the first record in a series of upcoming releases for them. For those of you who don't already know, these guys sound like SACRELIGE, AXEGRINDER, and DOOM if you mixed in KREATOR and ENGLISH DOGS (*Forward into Battle* era), that is. This recording isn't quite as good of a recording as their *Only the Dead Know the End of War* LP, but it certainly does the job and actually adds to the rawness, which is good. Too clean = metal; fuck that shit. The lyrics on this EP seem more defined and well thought out, and the guitars just a bit more sharp and cutting. The cover art is really nice drawing by Shuto, and even though this record doesn't actually contain the song "World Darkness," a personal favorite, it still seems a befitting title. Next time send an extra copy assholes! Get this now! (WK)
(PO Box 5223 Portland, OR 97208-5223 USA)

HELLSTOMPER / FAGGOT KINGS – split EP

Fuck yes you lucky cretins! The legendary HELLSTOMPER, straight from the heart of Dixie, has teamed up with the FAGGOT KINGS to unleash a fine slice of American rock 'n' roll on Rockin' Bones Records. The HELLSTOMPER side stars out with a face full of whiskey and bile with a cover of GG ALLIN's "Rowdy Beer Drinkin' Night." Fuckin' A—this tune will immediately get you off your barstool! Now you've *got* to fuck or fight! Mr. Allin would approve of this hell-bent for destruction rendition of his song. The second cover song HELLSTOMPER does is "Up Against the Wall Redneck Mother," by Ray Hubbard, another tasty snippet of Americana. Be sure to pick up a CD of Mr. King's new project *Possum Dixon*. Side B features the FAGGOT KINGS from Germany, who provide two heart-felt barroom rockers with shouted vocals and high-octane guitar noise pushing the shit to the limit. This is a good split EP! (BR)
(Rockin' Bones, c/o Gualtiero Pagani, Borgo Palmia 3a, ITALY, info@rockinbones.it)

HETTENDES – "Cowboys con Cojones" CD

These guys know how to deliver some quality country tunes.... no, not the new country stuff. HETTENDES does choice covers of JOHNNY CASH, GLENN DANZIG, MIKE NESS, MOTÖRHEAD, NEIL DIAMOND, and HANK WILLIAMS—*that* country music. Their originals are solid as well. An excellent Belgium country-punk-ish release. (HM)
(Drunkabilly, Postbus 87, 9050 Ledeberg #1, BELGIUM, www.drunkabilly.com)

HIGH ON CRIME – "Pour Some Sewage on Me" EP

Fucking heavy as all hell, full throttle, pedal-to-fucking-metal hardcore here. This is pure hate and rage put to vinyl, and it's so good. Distorted to all hell, with bulldozer bass, ferocious guitar, and the non-stop drum mayhem.

Dear god! The vocals and lyrics are screamed with intensity while lines such as "March 20th, 2003 you stole everything that meant anything to me" from the song "Only Son" describes Bush's shock and awe campaign with the anguish and emotion required for such subject matter. Live this band is absolutely amazing—you know when you get the members of ARTIMUS PYLE and KUNFU RICK in the same band there is gonna be hell to pay. Recommended. (WK)
(Hungry Ghosts, PO Box 620241, Middleton, WI 53562)

THE HILLSTREET STRANGLERS – "Ready Able and Unstable" CD

The scathing lyrics and the snotty vocal delivery reminds me of Frank Discussion's style, but the HILLSTREET STRANGLERS are more pop-punk than the FEEDERZ. Luckily, the lyrics are included in the CD, but unfortunately, they're so small and unclear, I can barely read any of them. Ultimately, this is a solid CD. (HM)
(Brain Constipation, www.brainconstipation.com,www.eisforevil.org)

THE HOLOGRAMS – "Night of 1000 Ex-Boyfriends" CD

Produced by Blag of the DWARVES, this LA gal group dishes out some decent bubblegum punk. They have a good, primal rock sound with basic guitar and a lot of sweetness which almost reminds me of the old UK band KENICKIE. Cool lyrics about other gals in their circle of friends. (RL)
(www.teenaciderecords.com)

HOLLY GOLIGHTLY – "On the Fire" CDEP

Three tunes and one interactive-multimedia-self-starting-cross-platform rock (country?) video from the HEADCOATEE Most Likely to Succeed. If you've been charting Ms. Golightly's career trajectory you'll know that she done more hard-hitting stuff, and that she tries her hand at softer and mellower countrified sounds on her solo releases. Two sides of a coin. *On the Fire* is real borderline *MRR* material: of all three tunes, only "Slowly but Surely" possesses the *punk rock menace* required to sneak limbo bar into this magazine—the title track and her cover of WILLIE DIXON's "My Love" are far more traditional country blues, filtered through Golightly's midlands beer-goggles. The video for "On the Fire" is a nice film-school experiment, but won't get a lot of play around my pad. Worth it if you've got the patience for quieter, slower, and longer (rather than *louder, faster and shorter*). (JH)
(Damaged Goods, PO Box 45854, London E11 1YX, UNITED KINGDOM, www.damagedgoods.co.uk)

HUMAN EYE – "Human Eye" LP

Now *this* is art-punk. Unlike some of the other experimentally-tinged krap I've dawdled through this month with my head tilted, resting on my hand, these guys have managed to keep the aggression intact while creating enough room to throw everything but the kitchen sink into the sonic mix. The record is occasionally headed towards BOREDOMS randomness territory, but always hits a hard left at "garage" and brings it home to the rock. This band has Tim Vulgar from the late, grate (editor, leave it alone) CLONE DEFECTS, which injects a manic intelligence into the proceedings that the other "art punk" bands just try to fake their way through. The guitar sound on this is pure HELIOS CREED, circa *3rd from the Sun*, dig it. Everyone says they are a fantastic live band as well, and I hope the cash-stuffed vaults at In The Red hemorrhage enough green for them to make it out here. (RW)
(In The Red, PO Box, 50777, Los Angeles, CA 90050)

IT'S YOU – "Iraq" EP

On their debut EP, IT'S YOU from Japan creates some harsh, blown-out hardcore with a dark and aggressive side. I definitely heard influences coming from bands like RUDIMENTARY PENI and early NEUROSIS in the songs. And while I really like those two bands, I couldn't really get into this EP. The songs didn't really have any bite to them and the recording has a somewhat muffled, live quality to it that I didn't really care for. (RC)
(Too Circle, c/o Shingo Maeda, 221-3 Hi-home Kodaira 510, Nakamachi Kodaira-city, #187-0042, Tokyo, JAPAN, toocir@so-net.ne.cp)

JETS VS. SHARKS – "These Tired Monuments" CD

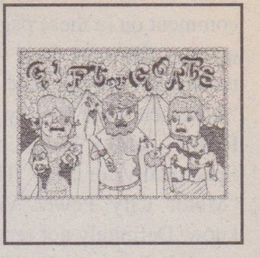
First of all, shitty band name! And isn't there also a BEAR VS. SHARK? Anyway, onto the music. The first track starts off pretty heavy. After listening to it I was expecting some slightly metallic hardcore with melodic vocals, and that's exactly what I got. Mostly this band leans towards HOT WATER MUSIC-esque emocore, but at other times the guitars lay down some heavier riffs that give them a more hardcore sound. With a song that's called "The World is my Fuse" you can tell that these guys know where their emo roots lie, but I wished they actually sounded like RITES OF SPRING instead of just stealing one of their lyrics as a song title. I guess this is decent for the genre of contemporary hardcore that you'll find on the Warped Tour or whatever, but this sound is boring and just doesn't appeal to me at all. (JD)
(Cat 'n' Cake, 20 Poyntz Rd, Overton, Basingstoke, Hants, RG25 3HJ, UNITED KINGDOM)

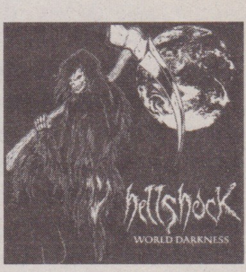
THE JIM-JIMS – "Box Lunch" EP

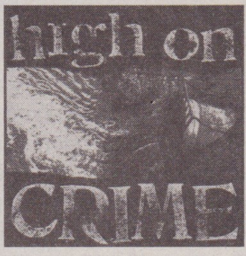
On tunes like "Box Lunch" and "Slow Bang," THE JIM JIMS sound not unlike a modern, more hip version of JONATHAN RICHMAN & THE MODERN LOVERS (with lots of guitars). Their minimal cover of "Goober Peas" cinches the point with its unselfconsciously funny lyrics with VIOLENT FEMMES-ish vocals. I don't know what goober peas taste like, but this band may be an acquired taste—except with their straight-on rockin' "F—ed Up Again." (SS)
(Wee Rock, P O Box 333, Springfield, MO 65801)

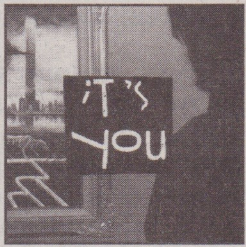
JEFF NONSENSE – "Turban Sprawl" EP

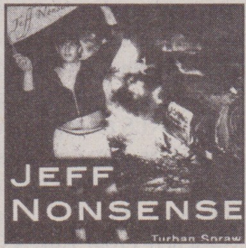
Ugh, this is pretty fuckin' terrible. Hardcore played at a mish-mash of tempos, mostly settling on blast-beat/grind territory with an obnoxious "jazzy" interlude and some other equally obnoxious "joke" snippets in between songs. The vocals have a pretty generic, tough American hardcore vibe. This 7" EP is limited to 100











(why even bother?) and suffers from having some of the worst art and lyrics I've had to comment on in these pages. I won't go so far as quoting them, as their song titles tell most of the story: "Smells Like Fish (In Your Pants)," "If Semen Were Money, Your Mom Would Be Rich," and "Built by Jesus, Designed Specifically for Sex." They bill themselves as "Motor City Power Violence," just so you know. Definitely not recommended. (GN)
(www.jeffnonsense.com)

JIYUNA – "The Devil is Waiting in the Palace… Rush Courageously" LP

I love the screen-printed packaging of this record. This immediately gives this band some extra points in my book. The lyrics and liner notes are also pretty well-written and give you a definite feel of what this band is about: honest and emotional DIY hardcore punk that isn't very easy to pinpoint, but seems to draw a lot from 90s emo bands and some of the bands on No Idea records. Some songs have that strong emo vibe, mostly due to the vocals, while others focus more on the guitars and border on being metallic hardcore. I must say that I like the emo songs more than the ones on which they try to go in the heavier direction. It took me a little while to get into this musically, and although the songs aren't that memorable, I still enjoyed this. The only critique that I have is that this band doesn't seem to have enough of a face of its own, but I'm sure that will come in the future. Nice effort. (JD)
(IFB, www.ifbrecords.com)

JOHNIE 3 – "Girls Girls Girls" CD

Great RAMONES and SCREECHING WEASEL stuff from this Ohio band. Really guitar-heavy production and "whoa" hooks galore. Not the least bit original but a serious blast of energy and fun. Killer! (RL)
(Cheapskate, www.johnie3.com)

JOHNNY COHEN & THE NEW AGE NAZIS / NETJAJEV SS – split EP

From what I can gather, these are both "joke" Nazi bands. Ha ha. Sweden's NETJAJEV SS has lyrics that are racist, sexist, anti-communist, etc. Do people find this stuff funny? I think that even if they did, this band isn't clever enough to make the grade. Their music is tough guy street/hardcore and is fairly well-executed. JOHNNY COHEN, although from Holland, has a nice, early LA punk sound. They bust out some quasi-covers (a RAMONES tune and "Adolf Was a Piss Artist") as well as some good originals, and are obviously having fun rather than just trying to be offensive. (PC)
(Rescued From Life, PO Box 14821, Haltom 0City, TX 76117, nkcsmd@hotmail.com)

JOHN WILKES BOOZE – "The Heliocentric Views of John Wilkes Booze Pts. 1&2" LP

JOHN WILKES BOOZE is back with more of their trashed-out soul punk jazz. I just can't get enough of these guys. I love Seth's distinctive voice and the great music this band makes. This one has a lot of rants and raves along with blasting horns and driving bass. It's probably not the kind of music your average punk can handle, and that is exactly why you need hear this. 300 copies with painted covers. Very nice. (CK)
(Saint Ives, www.johnwilkesbooze.com)

KEVIN K. & THE REAL KOOL KATS – "Perfect Sin" CD

Another entry in the collected works of KEVIN K.—an ever-expanding back catalog of CDs, LPs, 78s, Edison cylinders. The earlier stuff I've brushed up against is New York demi-glam in the NEW YORK DOLLS or HEARTBREAKERS mode: *Perfect Sin* ditches a lot of the bent strings and Johnny Thunders screech for a faster, stiffer beat that plasters over a lot of the personality of the earlier records. The clean-as-biotech production doesn't help, either—this kinda of mid-tempo business requires a lot of *dirt* in the mix to get its point across to the casual listener. (JH)
(Full Breach Kicks, www.fullbreach77.com)

KING CHEETAH – "The King Cheetah LP" CD

It's a weird mix. The music is straight ahead rock 'n' roll circa 2005, and it's very easy to picture them rockin' out on Conan *a la* the HIVES, but in contrast the lyrics on the enclosed booklet are all pure BILLY BRAGG, UK-centric, lefty sturm 'n' bile. Themes of anti-royal family, anti-militarism, and despair at the inexorable rise of international business empires are juxtaposed with this finely produced indie rock, which frankly must be a "live thing" because it moves me about as much as a new U2 record would. Here's to the new, younger, faster "U2": politics good, music "eh." (RW)
(Spitshine, www.spitshinerecords.com)

KNOCKOUT KINGS – "The Lion" CDEP

I'll let you into a wee reviewer secret of mine. Any band that thanks God on their record gets slammed. Lets look at this objectively. Thanking God (very few folks seem to thank Allah, or Jahweh, or Buddha) is, well, a public statement. Making a statement if you like. And as such, is fair game. Lets face it, according to his bestselling biography ("The Bible") he's a pretty vindictive, angry, unforgiving, vengeful bastard. The KNOCKOUT KINGS have thrown me a bit of a curveball though. I mean, they thank Jesus. His son. Not the big guy upstairs, but his progeny, whom he sacrificed 'cause we are all a bunch of sinful bastards. It could be argued of course, that Jesus *is* God (Father, Son, Holy Ghost—Holy Trinity etc). But fuck it. Fuck the theology, and fuck these guys too. Jesus died for his own sins (though I guess you can't choose your parents). The music? Retarded screamo/emo angst. The lyrics are garbage too. I really don't think Jesus would approve of all this "baby I'm going to cut you with a knife" stuff, even if it is purely allegorical. (RK)
(Doll House)

KURSK – "The Implication" EP

KURSK is from Canada and this is their first record. First off, the sleeve of this 7" looks great. The music is crusty hardcore with great female vocals, and I enjoyed listening to this a lot. It varies from atmospheric guitar parts to full-out raging hardcore, like on the second-to-last track. Overall this release reminded somewhat of TO WHAT END?—and that's definitely a compliment. Very solid debut and I hope to hear more from this band in the future. (JD)
(Spiral Objective, PO Box 126, Oaklands Park, SA 5064, AUSTRALIA, spiralobjective.com)

KURWA APARATA – "That Was Not Our Dream" EP

Dark and heavy hardcore from Austria. Seven of eight songs on this EP are played at breakneck speed with frantic drumming, but the best track is the more mid-tempo "This Life is for You." Though the screamed vocals get a little monotonous over the course of the record (more variation please!), the music is driving and energetic enough for me to overlook it. The lyrics—some in English, some in German—deal mainly with the desire to live a life apart from this society's poisonous and corrupting influences. As if to drive this point home, the record is a completely DIY project released by the band, and the packaging and booklet are simple, effective, and refreshingly free from bad computer artwork. (CS)
(www.med-user.net/kurwaaparata)

LAST MINUTE / MORTAL COMBAT – split EP

This split brings us two great bands from Southeast Asia playing fun, sloppy, thrashy hardcore punk—no tricks, no gimmicks, and no attitude. LAST MINUTE, who appears to be a female-fronted straight edge band, plays fast, straightforward HC. Three of their four songs are about sex. The "Masturbate" and "Incest… in your head" youth-shouts alone make this record worth listening to. MORTAL COMBAT plays explosive, high-energy thrashcore that sounds like something on the 625 roster. A nice surprise. (VH)

(Thrash Steady Syndicate, c/o Muhammad Fairuz Bin Taswadi, Blk 204, Marsiling Dr, #07-208, SINGAPORE 730204)

LAST UNDER THE SUN – "All Empires Crumble" CD

A four songer from this UK punk/melodic hardcore band. Along the ways of early LEATHERFACE and GBH. This is an anti-war release so there's some bite here. The second top-notch release I've heard from these guys. (RL)
(Iron Man, PO Box 9121, Birmingham, B13 8AU, UNITED KINGDOM, www.lastunderthesun.co.uk)

THE LAWRENCE ARMS – "Cocktails and Dreams" CD

Cocktails and Dreams is a collection of odds and ends from Chicago's prolific LAWRENCE ARMS. Their punk-ish, gritty-but-polished, melodic emo sounds like an even mix between JAWBREAKER and FIFTEEN. The CD includes what is my favorite stuff by them, the tracks off the split CD with SHADY VIEW TERRACE. A lot of the other tracks on here (from various compilations, as well as some unreleased stuff) are probably of interest to any fan of the band. (WL)
(Asian Man, PO Box 35585, Monte Sereno, CA 95030)

LEBENDEN TOTEN – "Dead Noise" EP

For their sophomore effort, Portland's LEBENDEN TOTEN has shifted towards a clean, almost power pop sound. *Sike!* They still play fucked up noize! Chanel's vocals, which are still vicious, are a bit less prominent in the mix on this record. Otherwise, this EP won't surprise any fans of their first record. Hyper-distorted guitars, relentless drumming, and bitter, paranoid lyrics are the name of the game here. Naming ex-members may be the mark of lazy reviewing sometimes, but I think in this case it's helpful: Frank of ATROCIOUS MADNESS does duty as guitar player in this band, and LEBENDEN TOTEN doesn't stray too far from the sound explored by that band. That is, LEBENDEN TOTEN has clearly been raised on a steady diet of raw, raw Japanese hardcore in the vein of CONFUSE or GAI, and would certainly be at home on the current Crust War roster (though they are probably even *less* accessible than bands like FRAMTID or DISCLOSE, despite having a nearly-buried sense of hookiness that keeps their songs from being unadulterated noise). What further separates LEBENDEN TOTEN from a sea of posers is their angry, insightful lyrics, which go far beyond just cutting and pasting pieces of DISCHARGE haiku together. Definitely not for the clean-cut, the liberal apologists, or the tame, LEBENDEN TOTEN continues to be a personal favorite and is easily one of the best bands in hardcore punk. (GN)
(Overthrow, 402 Maruta-Palace, Shimoshinskuku, 21-5, Ichikawa, Chiba, 72-01, JAPAN)

THE LEGENDARY HUCKLEBUCKS – "Rattle All Night Long and Shake You!" CD

It's good natured and kind to animals, it's psychobilly minus the "psycho," it's driven by diet pills and scented by Febreeze, it's all that and more, somehow less than the sum of its ingredients… *Rattle All Night Long and Shake You* will appeal to rockabilly mavens that crave less "trad" and more "zip" to their entertainment—it made me uncomfortable and sounded less like the Sound of Young America and more like the VANDALS' "Urban Struggle" stuck on "repeat," but what do I know? Pompadours take notice, outsiders turn away and *don't look back.* (JH)
(Rock 'n' Roll Purgatory, PO Box 771153, Lakewood, OH 44107, www.rocknrollpurgatory.com)

LOW POINT DRAINS – "Bottle o' Whiskey" EP

You wouldn't be able to tell by looking at the inconspicuously happy stick drawing on the cover of this record that inside is some fucked up, trashy rock and roll. Truly great, over the top, messy, noisy, reverb-filled garage punk that makes me happy. Turn it up—*loud.* (CK)
(Kuriosa, Biezenfeld 48, 7943 MC Meppel, HOLLAND)

LUPUS – "(Band Not as Shown)" CD

I have to say, this has grown on me. It has a genuinely hilarious cover. The lyrics cover a lot of tokin territory, as well as fat people, bars, chicks, and suchlike. Musically, this competent trio runs the gamut from SUICIDAL TENDENCIES to FANG, via RANCID and SUBLIME. Party music for frat-punks with above-average intelligence/humor!? Oh yeah, they appear to be Canadian, if that makes a difference. (RK)
(Crusty, crusty_records@hotmail.com)

MAN IN GRAY / UNSACRED HEARTS – split EP

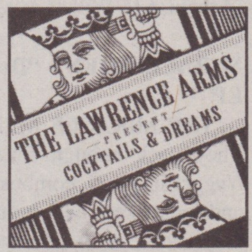
UNSACRED HEARTS have a twisted, rootsy sound kinda like GUN CLUB. Decent but nothing over the top. MAN IN GRAY has a gal singer and kinda sounds like PRETTY GIRLS MAKE GRAVES' punkier stuff. (RL)
(www.seriousbusinessproductions.com)

MAN IN GRAY / UNSACRED HEARTS – split EP

Despite being not very DIY-minded, both of these bands totally rock and have interesting sounds. MAN IN GRAY's "Hoboken" comes off like a modern, post-punky answer to the AVENGERS' "I Believe in Me" (but where's the lyric sheet?). UNSACRED HEARTS (who apparently played a "secret" show at Carson Daly's house—or is that a joke?) are not as memorable, but still do a pretty rockin' combination of 60s punk and modern hipster rock. "Serious Business" records, though? Please let that be tongue-in-cheek—I really want to like these bands. (PC)
(www.seriousbusinessproductions.com)

THE MEXICAN BLACKBIRDS / PINK SWORDS – split LP

I'm not certain, but it looks to me like most of the songs on this record came from other records. There are pictures on the back of what appear to be other records and a couple of the tracks are marked "Exclusive Tracks." But I can't find records from either band in the *MRR* library. Puzzling. The MEXICAN BLACKBIRDS play punk rock. That's it, they play punk rock. This isn't fancy-pants, pop-ish punk, or art punk. This is grab a fucking beer and let's get to business punk rock. PINK SWORDS are remarkably similar, though they put a little more of a



'77 twist to it. Do you know the SATAN RATS' song; "You Make Me Sick?" PINK SWORDS remind me of that song for some reason. They don't particularly sound like that, but they've got similar energy and tempo. (KK)
(Rockin' Bones, Borgo Palmia 3A, 43100 Parma, ITALY, www.rockinbones.it)

THE MEXICAN BLACKBIRDS – "Fear of Texas" 12"

Man, these guys come out of the gates swinging, like a bucket of fucking ice water during an afternoon nap. This is not for the timid. If you like your punk rock straight up and not watered down with ice or a mixer, then pony up to the bar. It's melodic without even a hint of pop, well played, but not polished, and full of angst. This is the shit. (KK)
(Mortville, PO Box 4263, Austin, TX, 78765)

MIGRA VIOLENTA – "Holocausto Capitalista" CD

I really think you need to hear all 17 songs of this crazy, fast thrash from Argentina's MIGRA VIOLENTA. They blast through these tunes with a wild, aggressive edge, and while most of it is pretty straight-forward thrash, I hear a lot of youth crew creeping in (and even a touch of screamo). Political lyrics plus eye-catching cover art… you really can't go wrong! (RC)
(Infected, c/o Daniel Cano, M. Pedraza 60, cp 1688, V. Tesei, Buenos Aries, ARGENTINA, infected-rec.8m.com)

MINIWATT – "I Can't Stand Waiting for It" CD

Cleanly produced (but ain't they all these days?) post-emo indie rock. Period. These guys are really good players, but the songs are too repetitive to really hook me. I want accidental rock. (RW)
(Arbeid, 616 Willett Ave, Riverside, RI 02915)

MIRACLE MEN – "Don't Hide Your Love" EP

THE MIRACLE MEN are a confused lot. They pack enough fuzz to fuel a thousand *Nugget*-inspired combos. They're fancy lads and look like a beat group. The trouble is that they end up with something that bears a slight resemblance to actual power pop, but they never commit 100%. The scorching hooks of the title track quickly give way to slightly above-average garage punk. This trade-off happens again on the flipside and I'm so frustrated I could cry. I chalk it up to the fact that they are four handsome European men clearly zonked on fashion and amphetamines. The hooks, when they come, are undeniable. I just wish there was more of 'em. (MC)
(Kuriosa, Biezenveld 48, 7943 MC Meppel HOLLAND)

MISHAP – "Truth of War" EP

This five-piece band from the Boston, Massachusetts area charges hard with a dual guitar attack of blistering punk. Just one look at the band names that the members are wearing or have tattooed on them, and you know where this ENGLISH DOGS, DISCHARGE and CONFLICT-influenced band is coming from. It is a little rough around the edges, but overall these seven tracks pass the test. (RC)
(Social Napalm, PO Box 4073, South Chelmsford, MA 01824-0773)

MOIST HOST – CD

Not to be confused with the equally misfortunately named MOIST FIST, MOIST HOST took up about 15 minutes of an otherwise reasonably well spent existence, featuring meandering echo laden guitar *a la* East Bay Ray (if Ray was to pick with his teeth while fretting with his nose). Lots of BUTTHOLE SURFERS worship minus the guts and glory of those aforementioned, legendary sputterers of art damaged rock and roll genius. (BS)
(Butter Flavored, PO Box 1041, Sioux Falls, SD 57101)

MONISTATS – "Let's Disinfect!" CD

MONISTATS plays super fast pop punk like SCREECHING WEASEL or DICKIES. The album is sloppy with tinny production. The songs are unspectacular and, with the whiny, high-pitched vocals, so annoying that I had to tear the headphones off in the middle of the second track and finish the review. If I could say two good things about the band they are 1) they do not take themselves seriously 2) they are energetic as shit. But that doesn't make me want to listen. (WL)
(Bony Orbit /Pom Pom)

MS. 45 – "Pop!" EP

Cool, very catchy pop from Portland. It treads close being to too wimpy, but still has enough roughness to keep its edge. Unfortunately, most bands that sound like this tend to get too slick, so I beg you guys...please, please stay punk, MS. 45! Your PENETRATION meets early GO GO'S sound (with great male backups) is always welcome around these parts. (PC)
(www.ms45.net)

NAVIES – "An Estate" CD

Hey, this band is from Northern Virginia and surprise!, they sound like a Dischord band from the mid-90s. I am hit-or-miss on this style normally, and the NAVIES lost me on their seven-minute plus second song. If you aren't the WIPERS please keep your songs short. (JF)
(Lovitt, PO Box 100248, Arlington, VA 22210, www.lovitt.com)

NERVOUS PATTERNS – "You Can't Change / Beautiful Brutal"

One of the numerous LOST SOUNDS spin off bands, the NERVOUS PATTERNS features both Alicja and Jay from aforementioned band. NERVOUS PATTERNS sounds a lot like the LOST SOUNDS. In fact, the two bands sound so similar that I wonder why this is an offshoot. If you like the trashy electronic sound of the LOST SOUNDS, then I am sure you will like the NERVOUS PATTERNS too. (JF)
(Zaxxon Virile Action, CP 1218, Sorel-Tracy, QC, CANADA, J3P 7L5, www.zaxxonvirileaction.com)

NO HEROES – "We Ain't No Heroes" EP

I'm still trying to figure out what NO HEROES is singing about. It all seems to be pretty snotty, you-think-you're-so-smart, I-wish-you-were-dead kind of stuff. Musically, it's got a variety of 80s styles going on: thrash *a la* the good early Boston bands, one song that sounds like a sped-up DOA tune (yes!), and some 7 SECONDS-like whoa-ohs ("Political Song" has the best chorus: "*Whoa* is me!"). Is it good? If the lyrics aren't as dumb as I think they are, then hell yeah. (PC)
(Blind Spot, PMB 697, 3534 SE 52nd Ave, Portland, OR 97206. www.noheroestheband.com)

NOISEAR – "Submit to the Subliminal" LP

Apparently the recording on this record is from 1999, but is just now seeing the light of day. NOISEAR, who are from New Mexico, blast their way through 13 songs of hammering grindcore. Fast and furious with lots of metal overtones… too bad the mix on the drums sounds so bad. Only grindheads need apply. (RC)
(Nuclear Ass)

THE OMENS – "Destroy the ESP" CD

My first listen to this CD didn't do it for me. I was thinking it's average by-the-books CYNICS-esque garage. After two or three listens, though, this is really getting to me. Dirty garage rock with screeching falsetto vocals and trebly organ. The band let loose and the songs really rock. Great stuff. (CK)
(Hipsville International, 2591 South Meade Street, Denver, CO 80219)

OTHER GHOST – "Manpire" CD

OTHER GHOST weaves melodies of the melodic emo type with guitar lines that remind me of FUGAZI and DBS over dance rhythms played by a drummer who is no Canty. Their quirkiness reminds me of the somewhat forgotten M BLANKET; a lot of the more driving parts sound like TORCHES TO ROME. The

vocals sound charred and scarred but carry melody pretty well. The whole recording has a pretty lo-fi feel to it—kind of tearing at the seams. Packaging is DIY looking—sparse like the album—very Olympia. (WL)
(Radio Is Down, PMB #1436, 120 State Ave., Olympia, WA 98501, www.radioisdown.com)

PACK / SOL – split LP

Fans of crust, meet your new gods. Two of the best bands playing in Europe these days, PACK and SOL are DIY to the bone and both bands play straight-up crust the way it is meant to be played. Damn! PACK belts out the noise mayhem without a pause. They remind me of how crust sounded in the 90s—punk with a metal edge, a ton of distortion, screeching screamed vocals, memorable riffs, and a crazy barrage of drums, all topped off by the crucial sound bite clips. SOL shares all the same qualities as PACK, albeit with their own unique style. They're bit more noisy and it is quite hard to keep up with the lyrics because their two singers seem to say many different lines at the same time (without it getting annoying). Both bands are perfect at what they are doing. (WK)
(Rinderherz, rinderherz@gmx.net)

THE PARKINSONS – "Up for Sale" EP

Not to be outdone by their well-mannered mainland European cousins, England has come forward, risen to the occasion, thrown done the gauntlet, and stepped up to the plate. Awash with quality and quantity of the homegrown variety (where were you all when I was stuck there for four long years?), the PARKINSONS can add their name to that ever-growing, prestigious list. Definite '77 vibes with garage styling; rawer than the BRIEFS, more controlled than the POKERS, and a little touch of a new wave vibe as once mastered by the EXPLODING HEARTS. I'm sure they love JOHNNY THUNDERS and the DEAD BOYS as much as they dig the DAMNED. You'll be singing this one all the way down to the off-license and back. Rocking, loud and bursting with energy. (SD)
(Wrench, BCM Box 4049, London, WC1N 3XX, ENGLAND)

PARTYLINE – "Girls With Glasses" CD

PARTYLINE is the new band featuring Allison of BRATMOBILE. Why do I tell you this when there are also two other people in the band? Because this CD has a huge sticker on it that wants to point that out to you. I always wonder what the other people in the band think when this happens. That rant aside, PARTYLINE's *Girls With Glasses* would probably please fans of old BRATMOBILE. It is the type of simple punk rock that makes you wanna move your hips and bounce around your apartment. Good stuff, and hey, the sticker can be removed. (JF)
(Retard Disco, PO Box 461163, Los Angeles, CA 90046)

PERSEVERE – "Sex Tracks" EP

Ahhh, Lord love the Japanese... Here we have another ripping hardcore release of a Japanese band trying to sound like a Finnish band from the early 80s. Not nearly as blown-out or out of control as FRAMTID, yet still a fucking ripper. Continuing where their LP left, off these tracks could have been lifted straight off KAAOS's *Totaalinen Kaaos* LP! (TB)
(Insane World, 6-9-22-204 Itsukaichi Chuo, Saeki-Ku, Hiroshima 731-5128, JAPAN)

THE PINE – "Don't Need Regret" LP

The PINE, going now for I'd say about five years and with several previous releases, plays emo which owes a debt to RITES OF SPRING and their followers. I have heard them compared to EVERGREEN before but cannot confirm this. The vocals have a unique quality that makes the songs intriguing. The recording is oddly muffled and drenched in reverb—sounding a lot like HÜSKER DÜ, though the quality's not as good—it's cool sounding. They lack pretension in their sound, which is a step above most emo bands, but they still lack the edge that said DC forefathers provided, so the songs kind of drone on. Overall, I think a pretty cool and unique band (especially coming out of Bakersfield, California!) but not something I'd probably throw on. (WL)
(Alone, PO Box 3019, Oswego, NY 13126)

THE PLANET THE – "You Absorb My Vision" CD

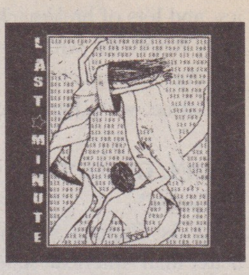
You know it's getting weird in Punkland when I can seriously talk about hearing influences like ROBERT WYATT and NILSSON and the RESIDENTS in a release rather than the UK SUBS, HEROIN, or SVART SNÖ. Well, these guys are obviously putting thousands of miles onto balding tires, trying to bring something different to a potentially jaded audience, night after night, and who am I to say that THE PLANET THE isn't punk? I will say that they lack anger, aggression, sloppiness, or a discernable rock 'n' roll intent. "Seething" these proggers ain't, so how about…"roiling"? (RW)
(5RC, PO Box 1190, Olympia, WA, 98507)

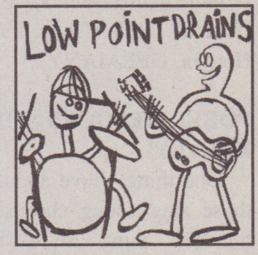
PLATE-O-SHRIMP / THE UNSTUCK – split EP

PLATE –O-SHRIMP's first song doesn't do much for me, but their live version of DOA's "Fuck You" is good. The UNSTUCK starts things off with a jovial beer sing-a-long, and follow it up with a solid punk ditty that has vocal melodies and musical breaks that remind of BLINK 182 and GREEN DAY. PLATE-O-SHRIMP has the better name, but the UNSTUCK have the better side of a decent split. (HM)
(www.plate-o-shrimp.com, www.theunstuck.com)

LA PLEBE – "Entre Cerveza Ritmo, y Emocion" CDEP

Not sure what you call an eight-track CD, especially when they're pretty short songs. In the glorious days of vinyl, this would've been a mini LP, or a 12" EP...whatever. I believe this is the second release (actually, come to think of it, I think the debut was similarly sort of in that grayish length area too!) from these Bay Area Latino punkers. Some songs in Spanish, some in English (including a suitably punked-up version of the POGUES' "Dirty Old Town"). All played and sung with plenty of speedy





punk phlegm, some fancy, frenetic guitar heroics, and lots of breakneck horns. Think a cholo early RANCID, with lots of horns and attitude. Me digs very much. You will too. (RK)
(Desarme, www.laplebe.com)

PÖBEL GESOCKS – "1000 Gute Gründe / El Zecho"

Q: Is German scum-fuck street punk any better than American scum-fuck street punk? A: Uh... maybe. Q: Does that make *1000 Gute Grunde* worth listening to? A: Uh.... No. (VH)
(Randale, Randalshop, Fichtenstrasse 5, 78658 Horgen, GERMANY)

PÖBEL GESOCKS – "1000 Gute Gründe / El Zecho"

One thing I love about German punk is all those sing-a-long choruses that sound like a hundred punx at a biergarten. PÖBEL GESOCKS take that to the extreme with two punk covers: Johnny Cash's "Man in Black" is given the Deutsch-punk treatment, while the flip appears to be a traditional-style drinking song by HEINO. Totally fun. Now drink up! (PC)
(Randale, Randalshop, Fichtenstrasse 5, 78658 Horgen, GERMANY)

THE PONYS – "Celebration Castle" LP

This is some super sweet pop music. The second album from the PONYS may be even more polished than the first, but I can't be bothered worrying about it. This is great music. Very catchy songs that manage to sound very familiar yet also sound very fresh. I could listen to the song "Get Black" over and over and over again, and trust me, I will. (CK)
(In The Red, PO Box 50777, Los Angeles, CA 90050)

PORK DUKES – "Pop Stars / Save the Pigs"

More retrofitted sounds from dear ol' England. Retro in the late 70s sense that is, with a distinct *Killed by Death* vibe permeating the groove, with splashings of that uplifting power-pop jangle. Two tunes of top notch quality, one live, which is always a dodgy choice to make for up and coming stardom, but the risk paid of. Hints of the BOYS, FAST CARS and, lets say for kicks, the UNDERTONES run true through the single. Unbelievably '77, and the catchiest thing since that damn Israeli goalkeeper denied Ireland their three valuable points. (SD)
(Bin Liner, PO BOX 18, Midhurst, West Sussex, GU29 9YU, ENGLAND)

RAKKAUS – "Tyo Vapauttaa" EP

Overall, this was a pretty weak month for the quality of records that I got to review. But then this one hit the turntable and made things a little better. Fast and furious hardcore from Finland, with an edge of blistering crust. Male and female vocals switch off of each other, and the songs are sung in Finnish. Limited to 500 copies and well worth picking up. Killer! (RC)
(Barrage Of Salt, PO Box 18001, Seattle, WA 98118, www.barrageofsalt.com)

RAMBO – "Bring It" LP

Fans expecting more of the same no-frills thrash from RAMBO's first LP will be pleasantly surprised. Tony's vocals have become much more brutal and unintelligible, while the music has taken on a melodic Swedish hardcore vibe, not unlike WOLFPACK or VICTIMS. RAMBO's lyrics are still unwaveringly anarcho as fuck—taking on everything from the system, to religion (of course), to apathetic ironic assholes. 19 epic tracks of awesome, well-produced hardcore with a progressive message. My only complaint is that the artwork is little too over-the-top. Comes with a bonus DVD of show highlights and a tour documentary. (CC)
(Havoc, PO Box 8585, Minneapolis, MN 55408, www.havocrex.com)

RAT BYTE – "My Boss is a Jerk" EP

RAT BYTE, a buncha youngsters from Connecticut, plays a style of hardcore that has been echoing throughout basements and garages in America for the last 25 years. Not breaking any new ground musically or lyrically, but playing from the heart with absolutely no pretension whatsoever. What you get here is eight tracks of simple, youthful hardcore punk with the occasional rockin' guitar lead. Song titles like "Frustration" and "School Daze" should give you the idea. This EP will be easy to spot with its garish full-color cover depicting skateboarders with green skull heads brutally murdering blue-clad pig police. (CS)
(FNS/Party Time!, PO Box 1299, Boston, MA 02130, www.fnsboston.net)

RAW POWER – "Fuck Authority" 2xCD

Along with BGK, RAW POWER was probably the most well known non-UK, European hardcore band in the United States in the 80s. They toured the States several times, released records on Arizona's Toxic Shock label, and had a classic track (from which this early discography collection takes its name) on the seminal *MRR* comp, *Welcome to 1984*. Starting in 1981, they released their best album, 1985's *Screams from the Gutter*, at a time when most American hardcore fans had little to look forward to from stateside punk. That record took the classic American hardcore mold and added over-the-top guitar theatrics and incendiary vocals, and has stood the test of time as one of the best-ever hardcore punk records. Because of their relative popularity, RAW POWER's records (after their first highly sought-after LP) were pressed in fairly large quantities and have been re-pressed a number of times on both vinyl and CD, which is a good thing because they are essential listening for anyone with even a passing interest in hardcore. Which brings us to this release. It's a double CD on SOA records, an Italian label that recently co-released *Hate/Love*, a killer comp of classic-era Italian stuff. The first CD features the first RAW POWER LP, *You Are the Victim*, which was totally out of print and nearly impossible to find for any price until only a couple of years ago; another reissue of it is welcome. It also features *Screams from the Gutter* and *After Your Brain*, an okay LP that is decidedly more metal than it should be. Of this material, *Screams* is clearly their best, as *You Are the Victim* sounds almost demo-like in comparison and *After Your Brain* finds them just past their prime and sounding weirdly dated. Most of this material isn't too hard to find elsewhere, but this collection is an easy and excellent way for someone to get all of this necessary material in one place. The second CD features their *Wop Hour* EP, which is about as good as *After Your Brain*, and 32 tracks of live material, outtakes, comp tracks, and other ephemera. This is the stuff the already established fan of RAW POWER will be interested in. There are tracks from the *Raptus* comp and a couple of studio outtakes, but the majority of this material is live. Which is to say, it's not of the best sound quality, and is not necessarily "essential." Nonetheless, a lot of it is a real treat for the RAW POWER fan. Comes with extensive Italian-language liner notes, photos, lyrics, and flyers, all housed in a DVD-sized case. (GN)
(SOA, www.soarecords.it)

REASON OF INSANITY / RACE AGAINST TIME – split EP

REASON OF INSANITY has been at it for a while; I first heard them on their split with BREAD AND WATER a few years ago. They play fairly straightforward, USHC inspired by classic bands like (*Endless Struggle*-era) OFFENDERS. In theory, I should really like them, because they play fast, snotty hardcore punk without ever blurring into 625 speeds. Their side of the EP, however, is a mixed bag for me. Their first and second songs are really good, and stand the test of repeated listens. The vocals have an instantly endearing, timeless, US punk sound. The rest of their side doesn't really hold up though. There are some weird time changes, which cause the songs to lose steam, and the lyrics are pretty retarded: "We like classic rock/we like ZZ Top/we like to fucking thrash/we like to fucking stomp." On the flipside, RACE AGAINST TIME provides three originals and a BASTARD cover, and has a burlier, more modern sound overall. They are

a cool, if somewhat generic, addition to the school of hardcore that has most recently given us such bands as SLEEPER CELL. Their lyrics are in the nihilistic, pissed-off punk tradition that I never tire of, and overall I think their side is the stronger of the two. (GN)
(Burrito, PO Box 3204, Brandon, FL 33509)

REGULATIONS – LP

Wow, pretty heavily anticipated full length from the pride of Europe's wised-up recovering ex-thrashoholics. Short and quick: this is the LP many were waiting for the STITCHES to make back in the 90s: a fast, angry punk rock record that channels the best aggressive instincts of the GERMS, RHINO 39, FUNERAL and the other pre-hardcore LA bands of the day without aping them. Like those bands, REGULATIONS knows how to get a pure punk sound over; hoarse singing, solid drumming, and quick, short, stabbing guitar solos riding over songs that just don't stop… until they *should*. The feeling listening to a great punk record should be *a breath of fresh air*, and they pull it off. There are two songs on here that are as good as any late 70s punk song ever laid down: "Police Siren" and "Walking by Myself," either of which could slot in on a comp with their Holy Elders. It's about time a band got over the intimidation factor of Punk History and put out a great fucking punk record with actual tunes on it. Careful boys, you are just talented enough to go "Rancid" on us. Geekdom: there is both an American and a European pressing of this, so start yer twitchin'. (RW)
(Havoc, www.havocrex.com)

ROCKY AND THE SWEDEN – "THC" LP

Domestic release of this Japanese stormer from 1998. Being a fan of illegals, I'm all about the pot-inspired cover and songs, but if you think you're getting some hippy-dippy pothead music, think again. It's fast as fuck, totally ripping, Burning Sprits hardcore that blows away most others who play this style. If you dig later DEATH SIDE, light up a blunt and check this fucker out. (TB)
(Partners In Crime, PO Box 11787, Portland, OR 97211)

ROSEMARY'S BABIES – "Talking to the Dead" CD

Ah, another forgotten 80s hardcore band unearthed and compiled for the year 2005. All of the RAW POWERs, BATTALIONs OF SAINTS, and APPENDIXes (APPENDICES?) of the world have gotten the vinyl or CD reissue treatment, so all we've got left to look forward to is a sea of ROSEMARY'S BABIES-like reissues. God help us. Anyway, this isn't bad per se, just ultra-average, early 80s American hardcore with songs called things like "Sex Maniac" and "Alice in Murderland." This band released one EP, *Blood Lust*, in 1983, which is included in its entirety here. I believe one of these dudes went on to play in SAMHAIN; they are from Lodi, New Jersey, anyway, and have an obvious lyrical affinity for the MISFITS. The insert is practically nonexistent—a reproduction of the cover of the aforementioned EP, a couple of tiny photos, and nothing else. No info about the other tracks (so I dunno where they're from—there's 25 tracks in total), no context provided for the band, no nothing. For completists and fanatics at best. (GN)
(Ghastly, www.ghastlyrecords.com)

RYDEEN – "You Are Not Me" EP

This Japanese quartet offers three thrashers in a relatively lo-fi production mode, and they liked their title song so much that they have Japanese, English, and instrumental versions. The English version, oddly enough, has the most over-modulated vocal intensity, but the intensely riffy song is better for its high measure of aggro than for interesting songwriting. The opening to the Japanese version almost has a Scandinavian feel to it, thanks to a slightly different mix. (SS)
(Fade In Records, HG Fact, 105 Nakano Shinbachi-ni, Nakano, Tokyo, JAPAN)

SAF / LOMB – split EP

This split features two Dutch hardcore bands. SAF, on side A, reminds me of ANTISCHISM at times, especially in the songwriting and guitar work. They've got a very high-pitched screechy vocalist who kinda grates on my ears a little. LOMB, on the flip, goes for more of an all-out thrash approach with mid-tempo chorus/breakdowns *a la* Seein Red. Both bands have songs in Dutch and English. I like the lyrics to LOMB's "Crocodile Tears" in particular—"Thousands are weeping over one asshole shot/But when millions are starving the TV goes off." Released on a Czech label, this EP is worth seeking out for fans of modern Euro thrash. (CS)
(Badman, Martin Cesky, Nebrehovice 7, 38601 Strakonice, CZECH REPUBLIC)

SAF – "Think for Yourselves" EP

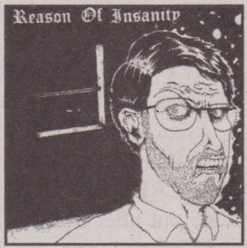
The artwork on the cover, insert, and labels say SUICIDAL TENDENCIES, but the actual music on the record says high-pitched vocals over basic, no frills, Dutch t(h)rash. Despite the weird cholo worship all over this, this record isn't bad. I mean, I would rather listen to "I Shot Reagan," but it still ain't bad. (CC)
(Balowski, c/o Roy Meijen, Haarweg 287, 6709 RX Wageningen, NETHERLANDS)

SAF – "Think for Yourselves" EP

SAF is a Dutch band that does a very metallic brand of hardcore. This is definitely too metal for my taste. If you are into the metal/crossover thing you may like this; I really don't. (MS)
(Balowski, c/o Roy Meijnen Haarweg 287, 6709 RX Wageningen, NETHERLANDS)

SCARRED / VOID CONTROL – split EP

What a treat. A split 7" of bands I'd never heard, and both bands smoke. VOID CONTROL sounds straight out of the 80s: smart political lyrics backed by melodic sing-along punk like MIA or even the TOXIC REASONS. Two great tracks that could easily have been on any Alternative Tentacles record from back in the day. SCARRED also sound like they're from 20-plus years ago, but this time from the West Coast oceanfront, like the CROWD or any of the tougher numbers on the *Beach Blvd.* comp. Great split. (TB)
(Puke N Vomit, PO Box 3435, Fullerton, CA 92834)



SCREECHING WEASEL – "Anthem for a New Tomorrow" CD

Ben Weasel says that this is his favorite SCREECHING WEASEL album, and that lots of other people have said so as well. So maybe I shouldn't even bother to say that this has always been my *least* favorite SCREECHING WEASEL record. I feel like they were a bit too ambitious on this one. They're at their best when they're honest, snotty, and raw. This album has all of those qualities, of course, but tries to add a lot of production, keyboards, weird vocal effects, and guest singers (including Fat Mike and Blake Schwarzenbach). Yet I'm reminded of Paul McCartney when he was pestered about whether or not he thought the *White Album* could've shed of it's more experimental (read: bad) songs. He said something like, "*C'mon*, it's the bloody *BEATLES* bloody *White Album*." I think what he meant was, "Let it be." (PC)

(Asian Man, PO Box 35585, Monte Sereno, CA 95030, www.asianmanrecords.com)

SCREECHING WEASEL – "How to Make Enemies and Irritate People" CD

Asian Man has been doing everyone a favor by re-mastering and re-releasing all the "classic" SCREECHING WEASEL LPs. This one came out after *Anthem for a New Tomorrow*, undoubtedly their finest moment. They did pretty well following that gem with this one. It contains the last of the songs the WEASELS wrote in that incredibly wonderful quartet of *Wiggle*, *My Brain Hurts*, the aforementioned *Anthem...*, and this one. It even features some dude from GREEN DAY on bass. It is, of course, a mandatory purchase if you don't already have it. And is probably a mandatory purchase even if you do. I've only ever had a shitty stereo, so I can't actually tell much difference with the sound, but I'm sure modern technology has highlighted the pop-punk genius even more. I won't try and describe the music: SCREECHING WEASEL invented the "post-RAMONES" pop-punk sound. Of course it's good. (RK)

(Asian Man, www.asianmanrecords.com)

SEE YOU IN HELL / MASS GENOCIDE PROCESS – split EP

This is one for all you crusties out there. Two bands hailing from the Czech Republic, and they both unleash a *crust war* on your unsuspecting ears. MASS GENOCIDE PROCESS starts off with a slow, metallic intro and then things speed up nicely, but those metal riffs stand strong throughout their song. SEE YOU IN HELL, who is more straightforward and upbeat in delivery, still manages to whip through three songs of fast and energetic punk. A solid split throughout. Be sure to watch for SEE YOU IN HELL on their European tour this fall. (RC)

(Not Very Nice, 5726 Sussex Ct., Troy, MI 48098)

SELFISH – "Cause Pain" 12"

For you SELFISH fans out there, this 12" probably feels like a long-awaited breath of fresh air. It comes about three years since their first full-length, and there has been nary a peep heard from them in the interim, which makes this one of the more anticipated releases of the year for me. *Cause Pain*, amazingly, is even better than their first LP *Burning Sensation*, which has remained a favorite in my household since its release. The song "I Want to Feel Some" is so ridiculously catchy and over the top that it had me singing along at top volume after only one listen. For those of you who have yet to hear SELFISH, they are the best traditional-styled Japanese hardcore band not from Japan ever, combining the ferocity and flair of bands like DEATH SIDE or CRUDE. To be honest, this style of music probably doesn't appeal to everyone; there are a *lot* of fairly gratuitous, almost decadent, guitar solos. Also, the lyrics are pretty stupid, which does nothing to take away from the status of this record as a great thing to throw on for a night of drunken revelry with friends, but may offend anyone with delicate literary sensibilities. Naysayers be damned—I think SELFISH has managed to be a consistently excellent hardcore punk band, and this record displays them in top form. A shoo-in for many year-end best-ofs, I'm sure. (GN)

(Feral Ward, www.feralward.com)

SHOP FRONTS – "Don't Quit" EP

Record #2 from this wave-making NYC combo is just as impressive as their debut. Driving and straightforward, the SHOP FRONTS brand of speedy '77 snot seems sorta out in a time where art-punk is the current king, but minute-and-a-half burners like these don't ever really go out of style. (MC)

(Rapid Pulse, www.undergroundmedicine.com)

SILENCE – "Mad Civilization" 10"

The TRAGEDY comparison on this record is, as with so many records these days, unmistakable. This Polish band just sounds a lot like the aforementioned Portland band did on their first record. Not that that's a bad thing, it's just not very original. Other than that, SILENCE is good at what they do. The songs are aggressive and pretty well written. If you can still stand to listen to this style of music you should consider checking this out. (JD)

(Les Nains Aussi c/o Nicolas Retiere, 3 Allee des Jonquilles. 44830 Bouaye, FRANCE)

SILENCE – "Echoes of Depression" LP

Dark, dark, Polish hardcore that will immediately call to mind the first TRAGEDY LP (in a man-TRAGEDY-is-so-much-better-than-this-band kind of way) mixed with some crusty-emo elements (e.g., a cello). Unfortunately for this band, the recording on *Echoes of Depression* is incredibly muddy, the drums sound totally weird, and the songs don't stand out enough to set them apart from the tidal wave of TRAGEDY wannabes *still* crashing into this review room. Nonetheless, I don't want to be totally negative about this record. It has some of good guitar parts, ample enthusiasm, and the lyrics are right on. Really, there's nothing *bad* about SILENCE, they're just hopelessly generic and play in a style that I am sure we are all a bit tired of by now. (GN)

(Destructure, 206 Rue Caponicre, 14000 Caen, FRANCE, www.destructurerecords.com)

SOUTH FILTHY – "Crackin' Up" LP

SOUTH FILTHY is a garage music lovers dream group featuring Msr. Jeffrey Evans, Jack Yarber (OBLIVIANS), Walter Daniels, Dan Brown, Ron Franklin, and Adam Woodward, plus more guests than I should name here. These are guys are having a fun time singing about beer and covering the HICKOIDS. This is an amazing album of pure rock and roll fun. It encapsulates everything I love about music. The cover states that 250 copies come with a bonus LP. Unfortunately, we didn't get one of those copies. (CK)

(Rockin' Bones, Borgo Palmia 3a, 43100 Parma, ITALY, info@rockinbones.it)

SOVIETTES – "LP 3" CD

More hot 'n' hard three-girl-one-guy action from this great Minneapolis band. Their third-and-a-half album, this takes off where the last left off. Complete with very good vocals and brilliant hooks, I'm a little amazed at this band's apparent ability to shit out super catchy and poppy punk songs at will. And they're even *better* live. Awesome. (AD)

(Fat Wreck)

DE STIPJES – "Feel Lucky Hippy?" EP

Now this would be an interesting trend, the reissue of rare garage-punk singles from the early/mid 1990s. The STIPJES were a bunch of totally obnoxious jerks from Holland who so mainlined the early Rip Off Records snottier-than-thou trip that the "bad attitude" was practically oozing out of their pores by the time they hit the States for the first Rip Off Rumble. No record can accurately impart experiencing their noisome physical presence. They've got a 7" and an LP on the aforementioned label, but this 7" is the goods—primal, guttural, shout 'n'

bash punk rock that was universally considered "garage" at the time for lack of a better term. It's records like this that generated the hyphen in 90s garage-punk. OK, could someone get started on reissuing the entire Pre-BS and Star Time labels now? How about just the CHEAPSHOTS and FINGERS 7"s? (RW)
(Rockin' Bones, Borgo Palmia 3a, 43100 Parma, ITALY)

STNNNG – "Dignified Sissy" CD
A discordant, noisy, damaged mess that brings to mind everything from BIG BLACK to the FALL with a nihilistic emo tinge. The wise-ass lyrics and smarter-than-you attitude led to my further trepidation on first listen, but as it went on it grew on me a little. Still, I know I will never listen to this again. (AD)
(Modern Replica)

SWELLBELLYS – "Bullets & Blades" LP
The half-black/half-coffee colored vinyl is so cool that you almost want to give this a positive review on principle. SWELLBELLYS, of course, don't need the help, and their latest evidences a thrashy UK punk sound with EXPLOITED influences. But I like these guys better. For one thing, the production is nice and thick (but not overdone), making this raw and full-sounding at the same time; for another, these guys show real adeptness at making riff-heavy Britpunk interesting by mixing tempos and showing a reasonable degree of intelligence. Above average for the style. (SS)
(PO Box 132, Leeds, LS6 2RR, UNITED KINGDOM)

TAKARU – "How Much Worse" EP
Heavily metallic, technically proficient, and deeply political hardcore from the Bay Area. This EP is TAKARU's swan song, I believe, though members of this band have regrouped to play in the similarly styled BURIAL YEAR. This EP (six relatively complicated songs, so it's quite a listen) features angry, gravel-throated vocals over time changes and dark metalcore riffs aplenty. *How Much Worse* was recorded at Polymorph, so the recording sounds great—this is a good thing, because without a clear recording a lot of this band's intricacies would be lost. By the way, TAKARU's lyrics are really fucking excellent—thought-provoking, angry, and political in a genuinely moving and non-generic way. (GN)
(Sky of Ill Rule #4, PO Box 170516, San Francisco, CA 94117)

TEENAGE BOTTLEROCKET / BILL THE WELDER – split EP
Two songs by each band here. TEENAGE BOTTLEROCKET cranks out a couple more QUEERS-esque ditties in top-notch fashion. BILL THE WELDER goes for a DESCENDENTS sound. A decent split. (RL)
(Menace To Sobriety, 615 18th St. B, Greely, CO 80631)

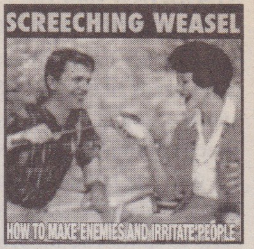
TRACTOR SEX FATALITY – "Live It Down" EP
I've heard these guys described as "art punk," well, that implies that they have some aspect of their sound that would drive people off who demand that their punk remain Hobbesian in character: short, nasty, and brutal. I don't think these guys are arty at all, because short, nasty and brutal *is* their sound. They are big fans of the loping bass sound that put early 90s Touch & Go bands like the LAUGHING HYENAS on the map, and their singer even has a similar set of pipes. This is a lumpy punk 7" with some early 90s hard-indie schmeared on it. Taster's choice. (RW)
(Big Neck, Reston, VA 20195)

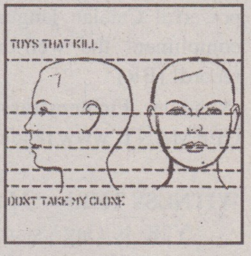
TRI-FIVES – "Don't Back Down" CD
TRI-FIVES play snappy melodic punk that could fit in with the likes of ONE MAN ARMY or DROPKICK MURPHYS, but the vocals and chord progressions often drift into emo territory. Their fast paced sound is probably pulling from STIFF LITTLE FINGERS, though you might not know it. There is some to be desired in the fields of songwriting, tact, style, etc. No, they don't suck. They are simply band. Band writes songs. (WL)
(Fastmusic, PO Box 206512, New Haven, CT 06520, www.fastmusic.com)

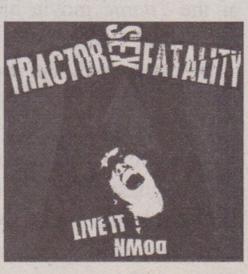
TSUNAMI BOMB – "The Show Must Go Off" DVD
Latest in the series of live shows filmed from Kung Fu. This features the usual good quality, but this popular band just doesn't do it for me. The gal singer, the songs, and the speedy delivery all leave me cold, though if you are a fan, this would be a no-brainer for you. I figure after all these years, like NO USE FOR A NAME, this just isn't a band for me. (RL)
(Kung Fu, www.kungfurecords.com)

TURTLE RAMBLERS – "We're Not Done With It… Yet!" CD
I don't know what to think: the usual points of reference no longer apply. Operatic vocals drive lyrics about bears. Rumbling fuzz guitar meets rinky-dink electric piano. Frail and fragile New Zealand-style pop (the CHILLS?) sideswiped by the TV KILLERS anorexic cousins with side-support BRUCE HORNSBY & THE RANGE at his rangiest. I have no idea who this music is supposed to appeal to, or what they're supposed to gain from exposure to it… it's an aesthetic nightmare. (JH)
(Nova Express, Demeure du Levant 21, Chemin des Carrières, 71150 Chagny, FRANCE, kaisernova@aol.com)

USS HORSEWHIP – "Wants You Dead" CD
USS HORSEWHIP is a rock band from Bellingham, Washington. Their sound is modern and lyrically strong, FUGAZI-influenced in the way the vocals and guitar interact. There's a lot of good sounding low end in the recording, with bass and drums giving some good "oomph," but I'm afraid the songwriting just isn't that great. They lose sight of rocking and drift into confusing pop/radio rock territory too often. (WL)
(New Regard Media, POB 5706, Bellingham, WA 98277, www.newregardmedia.com)







VIIMEINEN KOLONNA / KURWA APARATA – split EP

VIIMEINEN KOLONNA continues their raw Finnish hardcore assault, which brings to mind bands like RATTUS but with a way more updated sound. They use various influences, which could include current Brazilian hardcore as well as some Eastern European crust. Definitely a good solid listen, with some catchy parts to draw you in. Worth getting if you like them for sure. This is my first introduction to KURWA APARATA, and they are pretty good as well. Nice, stripped-down, unpolished hard-core/crust with social commentary about the ills of humanity. Basically, they play fast and manic hardcore for fans of powerviolence and crust. (WK)

(Kamaset Levyt Ruidosa)

VOLXSTURM / ULTIMO ASALTO – split EP

Skinheads rule OK! Randale Records from Germany has a very good split skinhead EP prepared for you bootboys! Side A features VOLXSTURM, from Germany, who has been playing oi! music since the early 90s. The first song here is a new recording of a song from that era, "Dead Fishes" which encourages the youth to think for themselves. "We still live our revolution." The second VOLXSTURM song is a new one that will appear on a forthcoming LP on DSS Records from Austria later this year. "Punk Rock Show" is a melodic sing-a-long number. Side B of this EP features ULTIMA ASALTO, from Spain, who has two excellent EPs on Camden Town Records from Spain and Bords De Seine Records from France. ULTIMO ASALTO delivers two brutal skinhead anthems for you. The first is "El Vostre Odi" and the second is "Forever" where you are cautioned: "Be prepared—the devil is walking by your side." ULTIMO ASALTO sings in the powerful Catalan language. The gruff vocals compliment the well-executed guitar. Good record! (BR)

(Randale, Fichtenstrasse 5, 78658 Horgen, GERMANY, www.randalerecords.de)

WITNESS THIS – "Money to Burn" CD

"Y2K is Gay" starts off this CD on the wrong foot. Then, they follow it up with a cover of the *Titanic* movie hit "My Heart Will Go On." *Yuck*! WITNESS THIS delivers standard three-chord punk, but the shaky execution and mediocre production don't do their music any favors. Their vocals and lyrics range from fairly insightful to whiny and sappy to young and naive. I guess my favorite part about this CD is the vomit and toilet overdubs. Overall, this exudes too much chauvinism. (HM)

(Witness This)

YELLOW BELTS – "Crash Landers" CD

This is how rock is supposed to sound. Very well written, played, and produced hard rock 'n' roll from Kentucky. I'm reminded of NASHVILLE PUSSY in their delivery and the songs are so well-structured that I can't helping thinking of personal faves the LEE HARVEY OSWALD BAND. Very good. (AD)

(Eugene, PO Box 1002, Lexington, KY 40588)

V/A – "Alive on the Anti Islands" CD

DSS Records sampler. DSS is an Austrian label that specializes in the ol' streetpunk genre. Pure streetpunk, they claim. Fortunately, for these ears, the majority of the 19 bands showcased tend towards the old British melodic oi! sound (think the BUSINESS in their early 80s prime, early PETER AND THE TEST TUBE BABIES and the like). There are mercifully few barked vocals, or CLASH wannabe stylings. WEDNESDAY NIGHT HEROES, BROILERS, CRASHED OUT, STOMPER 98, MOITEREI, SOUL BOYS, STYRIAN BOOTBOYS, and lots of other European heroes. (RK)

(DSS, www.ww.dssrecords.com)

V/A – "Anti-State" CD

The second in a trilogy (the first being the already released—and utterly wonderful—*Anti-War*) documenting the UK anarcho-punk scene from around 1979-1986 or so. Like its predecessor, you're graced with 21 tracks from 21 bands. Some of the names are probably familiar—THE MOB, FLUX OF PINK INDIANS, BLYTH POWER, AMEBIX, SUBHUMANS, POISON GIRLS, CHUMBAWAMBA, TOXIC WASTE— though part of the attraction for this series, for me at least, is the uncovering of hidden gems from bands such as POLEMIC and FAMOUS IMPOSTERS, some of whom never made it onto vinyl at all. Many of the tracks on this are taken from demos (and as such, are technically unreleased), which for sure gives the whole compilation much of feel that you had for the music and the times back in the day, when a lot of this stuff was first discovered, enjoyed, and passed around on cassettes. A truly vital document of a creative, important and incredibly (musically) diverse slice of UK punk, from when it mattered. And fuck me, does the music (not to mention the message) stand the test of time. Absolutely mandatory. (RK)

(Overground, www.overgroundrecords.co.uk)

V/A – "Just Go Destroy Everything in Sight!" CD

For an hour at least, people who are resentful over the difficulty presented by obtaining modern Japanese punk 'n' roll can flip this into the player and unclench. I will list the bands, now!: HAVE NOTS, JAIL GUITAR DOORS, COATTAIL RIDER, GOOGLE-A, NO EVACUATIONS, FACEFUL, VOLUME OUT, CHARGE, RAGSTEEN, CRISPY NUTS, DAS BOOT, NAKED, LANCET, BABY MONGOOSE, KILL TIMES, PAPPYS and GIMMIES, so there are some "known" bands in there. Well, first off the good tracks are by COATTAIL RIDER (who defeats the modern local studio tech and go raw 'n fast), NAKED (who does a very passable chug-pop oi! that references first album GREEN DAY), BABY MONGOOSE (who does a dead-on channeling of the WAITRESSES) and the KILL TIMES (who provides the most REGISTRATORS-like moments). There is no new SNEEZE or KEEN MONKEY WORK on this one, but there are only a few duff moments overall, so take out your little rhinestone purse and carefully unsnap the top.(RW)

(Dionysus, PO Box 1975, Burbank, CA 91507)

V/A – "Kicked Outta Purgatory" CD

I can't believe psychobilly came back. I mean, what's next? The greebo revival? Back-in-the-day, psychobilly shows used to put punk shows to shame for sheer bedlam and raw violence. I can't say I miss the particular sub-genre to tell you the truth, psychobillies were always—how can I say this—prone to being dickheads. Still, I shouldn't condemn a whole subculture because of some of the turds from my home town. Anyway—what we have here is a veritable smorgasbord of international psycho-talent, featuring such bequiffed big hitters as DEMENTED ARE GO (didn't they do a record with Ian Stuart from SKREWDRIVER?—thought I'd toss that in, y'know to spice up my review...I'm dyin' here), NEKROMANTIX, GUANA BATZ, DEADBOLT (*they're* not psychobilly are they?), and the PHANTOM ROCKERS. There are groups from as far a field as Denmark, France, Russia, Holland, Germany, Switzerland, England, and... Arizona! The music ranges from hard and fast (12 STEP REBELS) to poppy stuff (the PEACOCKS) and everything (within the wide realm of psychobilly) in between. There's even a psycho-metal/industrial band (BEVERLY KILLBILLIES.) I can't say that I'm that impressed with the new wave of psychobilly, though I like it when the bands sound a lot closer to punk than rockabilly—BANANE METALIK, and the DEMON CITY ROCKERS (who cover SLOPPY SECONDS "Horror of Party Beach") for example—and the more MISFITS-influenced stuff (ASTO ZOMBIES, KNOCK 'EM STIFF, and the LIVENDS). Also the German

band MAD SIN sounds pretty good, and DEADBOLT is always great. I would recommend this to anyone with more than a faint interest in this kind of music as a good place to start. (AD)
(Psychobilly US, www.psychobilly.us)

V/A – "Killed by an Axe" EP

Two songs each by three bands (JOHN DEERE DIAMONDS, BILLY SURF & THE VOODOO STARS and the BAD FUCKERS) who are all much better than their names might lead you to believe (unless "BAD FUCKERS" signifies "several people who aren't good at fucking," which would make it a pretty good name, rather than "baaaaaaaad fuckers you don't wanna mess with," which would be pretty silly, though I'll cut them some slack since I assume they're French). At any rate, since all three bands deliver some strong garage-y punk (plus a surfy goof by the BAD FUCKERS: guess they do mean it in the sense of not good in bed) that means you're getting three 45's worth of music for the price of one, a bargain even at import prices. (DD)
(Killed By An Axe, Apt. 123, 22 Ave. de Choisy, 75013, FRANCE)

V/A – "Kiss or Kill, Vol. 2" CD

A collection of songs from bands that play some club on Kiss or Kill Tuesday nights in LA. Some bands I've liked previously such as BANG SUGAR BANG, the RANDIES, and the OAOT'S. are on this, as well as bands new to me like BILLION STARS, the CLOVES, the WAKING HOURS, and CHROMOSOME TEA. Mostly punky rock 'n' roll and power pop here. I'd swing by an occasional Tuesday to catch these bands. This brings back memories of SF's Kilowatt club. (RL)
(War Room, PO Box 93-1813, Los Angeles, CA 90093)

V/A – "Louder than Hell" EP

There is no doubt that this is a shredding piece of vinyl. The line up here (all bands compiled by Katon from HIRAX) includes, HIRAX, the ACCUSED, TOXIC NARCOTIC, MUNICIPAL WASTE, and VÖETSEK. All the bands on the comp are well known and there are no stinkers to be found here. The track I was most interested in hearing was the "new" ACCUSED. Unfortunately it turns out that their track is just a re-recording of "Take My Time" from the *Return of Martha Splatterhead* full-length that came out back in 1986. The ACCUSED song still sounds great, but I really wanted to hear something new to see if they have stood the test of time. Nevertheless, this thing is a smoker and I am sure Six Weeks will have no problem unloading all of their copies. Thrash?! Don't mind if I do! (RC)
(Six Weeks, 225 Lincoln Ave., Cotati, CA. 94931)

V/A – "Opre Roma!" CD

Wow. This is an excellent compilation, bringing together 13 great bands from all over the world to raise money to benefit Roma children. Everything on here is good, and not a single band is from the US. Lots of new favorites like ALTERCADE from Chile, Croatians AK47, and Spain's NET WEIGHT, along with IN THE SIT, LARUSSO, and MUKEKA DI RATO. 25 tracks of ferocious hardcore mayhem—you won't be disappointed. (VH)
(Schandmaul, c/o Daniel Oppermann, Oranienstr, 168, 10999, Berlin, GERMANY)

V/A – "Thirteen Bands Who Think You're Gay" LP

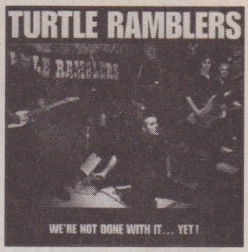
Featuring bands like ANAL CUNT, NUN SLAUGHTER, SIEGE, and EYEHATEGOD, this twenty-track comp of 1990s grindcore/death-metal/powerviolence/sludge/etc. is about as *eeeevil* as it gets. (VH)
(Menace To Society, 3260 W 2nd St., Greeley, Co 80631)

V/A – "To the Bitter End, Vol. 2" CD

I was excited to get this comp, since *Vol.1* was fucking great. Many comps fail by having too narrow or too diverse of a musical scope. This one, like *Vol.1*, is the perfect middle ground. You get 30 bands from all over the world, the common thread being high quality, melodic hardcore. Just a few bands stray in different directions, like Russia's the PAUKI (recorder punk!), an acoustic track by the always funny LOVE SONGS from the Bay Area, Japan's PEAR OF THE WEST (Fat Wreck pop with female vox), and Vallejo, CA's ESKAPO (brutal thrash!). Most of these bands are fairly obscure and really, really good, like Uruguay's HALO, Czech Republic's ZEMEZLUC, ASTA KASK sound-a-likes MID from Sweden, OKPLOIDE from France, and Sweden's FREI REPUBLIK PANAMA. It's awesome to hear a good percentage of bands with female singers on here. A superb comp! (PC)
(Vinehell, PO Box 36131, San Jose, CA 95158, www.vinehell.com)

V/A – "Zine: White" EP

From the human spittoon that is Martin from the SORES comes this unbelievably absurd release. Listing all the ridiculous packaging specifics that this record includes would be an exercise in futility, but it must be mentioned that this record is a white *square* vinyl disc wrapped in a zine with interviews of the four bands featured, all of whom specialize in outlandish blues-punk-sludge racket. You get unreleased cuts from In The Red darlings the LAMPS (who absolutely bury anything they've done previously with their tune here), the echo-drenched fuzz punk of LADIES NIGHT, and a couple of doses of pure noise from TRACTOR SEX FATALITY and HOTEL PISTOL. Not a stinker in the bunch, although you should see a doctor if the itching continues. Sure…some folks run from the muck found in these grooves, but I find it impossible to ignore and, thanks to the presentation and zine itself, quite inspiring. Stuff this brilliantly bizarre doesn't come around too often. Take note now or forever kick yourself. (MC)
(Martin, PO Box 1581, Davis, CA 95617, zine@thesores.com)



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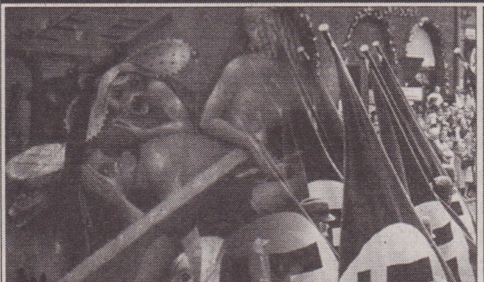

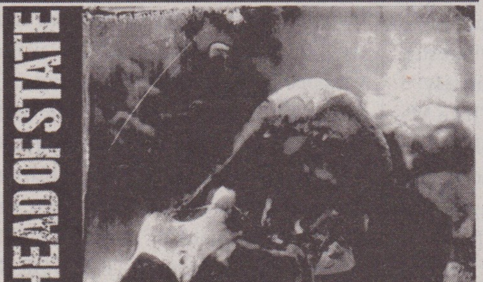

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DEMOS

Send all demos to: Erin Yanke, PO Box 1113, Portland, OR 97207. Please provide a postage paid price and a mailing address with your demo! Reviews by Erin Yanke, Peter Avery, & Ariel Awesome.

ACEFACE has a two-song CD of super catchy, sing-along, poppish punk. The mid-tempo songs are filled with catchy bass lines behind heavily distorted guitars and gruff but slightly nasal singing. Altogether it's sort of a mix between THE UNDERTONES, SCREECHING WEASEL and THE SWINGIN' UTTERS. (2 song CD, no lyrics, PO Box 26535, London, SE3 9WS, England, www.aceface.org) (Pete)

ANONYMOUS ANARCHIST plays a mix of styles that throughout our punk rock history have expressed anarchy. There's total Profane Existence bands style, growly and pissed, some classic more-rock-and-roll-fuck-you style songs, and some modern day AGAINST ME acoustic and half-acoustic sing-along songs. This might be a one-man band 4-track project. (11 song CD, lyrics included. PMB 60, 595 W. Main St., Norwich, CT 06360.) (Erin)

BLACK JERKS is a straightforward, three chord, rockin' punk band with vocals reminiscent of Candi from THE TRIGGERS. The vocals are a bit buried in the recording, though, and I think there are background vocals but it's hard to be sure. The music is fun and energetic, and the ridiculous studio bantering is funny. Yeah! ($3 ppd. 4 song cassette, no lyrics included. 1412 17th St. #C, Bakersfield, CA 93301.) (Erin)

CHIMERA was a Russian punk band from '92-97, and goddamn they were weird. How weird? There is a fucking cello and trumpet breakdown up on this tape! No joke. Side A left me kinda flat, but things picked up on side B with some heartfelt Russian crooning, and skate punk that combined progressive rock and circle pitting. Oh, and there was a damn flea in the envelope that jumped out and bit me. Fucking punk! ($4 ppd. 11 song tape, no lyrics. gatchinskaja 1-3. Volosovo, Len OBL. 188410, Russia.) (Ariel)

DEADFALL, a San Francisco band, has its discography tape put out by Beer Is Not Drink Records in the Czech Republic, who will also be putting out tapes by VICTIMS and FUCKED UP this summer. But DEADFALL is what this review is supposed to be about, and they are about modern thrash to the core. Tight and really fast, with their anger coming out strong musically, in the yelled vocals, and tone of the whole thing. I think most of this stuff is vinyl releases, but this is a comprehensive place to begin if you're a beginner, and if you're not, it's a good way to be a completist. Good work! ($4 ppd. 39 song cassette, lyrics included! Namesti Oldricha Blazka 75, Brezova nad Svitavou, 56902, Czeck Republic.) (Erin)

DEATH CAMP EXPERIMENT plays grindcore that has slow and moody parts to mix with the faster than fast sore throat explosions that make up the rest of the demo. The slow parts are rhythm-section oriented, and the fast parts have the vocals and guitars up front. Comes with a cool lyric sheet poster. ($3 ppd. 6 song CD, lyrics included. PO Box 12262, Huntsville, AL 35815-2262.) (Erin)

DSC plays fast angry sloppy punk rock that earns them a BLATZ comparison. I know they were hoping for DROPDEAD or something more grim, but I'm not feeling it. The songs average at about 45 seconds, and are pretty damn rippin'. ($3 ppd. 7 song CD, no lyrics. PO Box 500, Ft. Loudon, PA 17224) (Ariel)

ENCROACHED is hardcore that's not totally straightforward in its execution or pacing. They have touches of fancy guitar work, and interesting timing. The vocals are mostly shouted and don't dominate the songs. This is really good; a familiar style without generic execution. Yeah! (3 song CD, lyrics included. 221-3 Hi-home kodaira 510, Nakamachi Kodaira City #187-0042, Tokyo, Japan.) (Erin)

EVIL WEASEL is a pop punk band that seems to come from the newer Fat Wreck, sounding "clean" with fast songs about the Ladies (love songs and annoying shit about whores and bitches… yawn). They throw in some break-it-down parts that have ska overtones. The vocals are sung and prominent in the mix. This band is from Tel Aviv, and connected with the kid from Alabama through the Interweb. ($8 ppd US, $10 Canada and Mexico. 11 song CD, no lyrics. 1504 Olive Dr., Huntsville, AL 35801.) (Erin)

GYPSY is a two-piece that plays SWANS inspired metal that leans toward punk. Stellar drumming and clever guitar noodling keep me interested, but I'm really missing the low end here. It's not quite heavy enough. Their super posi outlook is really refreshing. Good. ($4 ppd/trade. 4 song CD, lyrics included. 1316 Fitzgerald St. Oakland, CA 94608) (Ariel)

HIPS plays garage rock with screamy unintelligible vocals. They have a distinctly Seattle sound to them, sort of like CHROMATICS. The very 60s guitar sound plays off of the harsh vocals well. Of the two demos sent in, the 10-song CD with the live tracks is totally superior. (10 song and 4 song CDs, no lyrics. 5124 Fernvale Rd, Bakersfield, CA 93306. hipsmusic@hotmail.com) (Ariel)

THE HOMEWREKERS are an all female band that plays your most basic punk rock. Three chord, up-tempo songs with heavily distorted power chords and vocals somewhere between talking, singing and screaming. The musicianship is pretty basic but the songs are solid and played well. The recording itself is pretty good as well. Not at all new or innovative, but what is? (8 song CD, with lyrics, www.homewrekers.com) (Pete)

HUB CITY LOSERS CLUB plays snotty, pop punk songs with elements of mid-80s power pop. The songs are in the vein of THE QUEERS or THE PARASITES. The guitars are distorted and often muted but they play some catchy, pretty little riffs. The drum-

ming is straightforward, mid-tempo stuff and the vocals are sung in a nasal style. Pretty catchy songs although they all start to blend together after a while. (13 song CD, no lyrics, www.myspace.com/hubcityloser-sclub) (Pete)

ILLEGAL GUARDIANS, during their more punk-rock structured songs, are made of surf guitar and sparse, basic drumming. During those songs the vocals are sung in a soft tone. Then they have songs where the music provides striking background accompaniment for the low key imaginative rants of the 10-year-old front man. They have a kind of ragtime song about donuts too, just to throw off any summarizing adjectives, and they cover a RAMONES song. Plus, you get to request an album to be taped on the other side of your demo, and these fine folks will do their best to satisfy your desires. Totally cool. ($3 ppd. 8 song Cassette, no lyrics included. 4007 N. Mississippi, Portland, OR 97227.) (Erin)

JESUS FUCKING CHRIST is an East Bay supergroup with members of VIOLENT COERCION and THE RICKETS. This catchy and abrasive Punk Rock begs the question, "Why the fuck are you reading and not fire bombing a police station, drinking 40z, and ripping it up in the pit???" Highly recommended. (5 song CD, no lyrics. puk-erecords@yahoo.com) (Ariel)

KOKAMO has simple and sparse guitar with a bar-rock rhythm section and a crooning/speaking vocalist. The vocals seem to dominate most of the mix, and remind me of L.A. rocker dudes. Can you really call yourself "Oakland's foremost rock duo" if your address is in Fairfax? (9 song cassette, lyrics included. P. O. Box 682, Fairfax, CA 94978.) (Erin)

MALLORY KNOX mixes elements of the early 90s Olympia scene, pop songs, and spacey stoner rock. The songs are mid-tempo numbers with guitars that tend to shy away from chords, and fairly well-sung female vocals that are way out in front of the mix. The recording itself is pretty good but lacks the dynamic that gives real energy to music. (4 song CD, no lyrics, Via Prenestina Antica 212, 00036 Palestrina, Rome, Italy, www.malloryknox.net) (Pete)

NO TRIGGER and **WASTELAND** split a CD of hardcore tunes. NO TRIGGER plays melodic tunes with an edge. On two of their songs, the guitars mix catchy pop riffs with some heavier chugging stuff. The vocalist sings with a somewhat nasal voice while they throw in edger-style back up screaming. Their other song is a bit heavier, with more screaming. WASTELAND sticks to the straight-out hardcore songs. The tunes are heavy, ultra fast and have all-out screaming vocals. They do throw in some hooks and breakdowns to keep it interesting, though. (7 song CD, no lyrics, no address) (Pete)

NUCLEAR SKULL AND BONES plays slow-to-mid-temp rock 'n' roll that's got metal guitar attitude galore, and a front man who's talking to the audience more than singing with the band. I like that he's performing to a crowd, even on tape! ($5 ppd. (3 song CD, lyrics included. 1101 98St. #6, Bay Harbor Islands, FL 33154.) (Erin)

PATIENT REPORTS TO BE DESTROYED is a mystery wrapped in an enigma, or a pet project of a mad genius. The Syd Barrett of punk has been crowned. This prolific demo is a diverse gold mine of short songs about the absurd and inane. The music ranges from basic lo-fi garage rock that sounds like the early DWARVES or GRAVE DIGGER 5, to surf, to robots making hip-hop, to eerie rock that sounds like NEUTRAL MILK HOTEL. Highlights for me are "stirrups, get your legs up in this" and the junk band party. Hell fucking yes. (40+ song tape, no lyrics. J. Bellon, 628 Monmouth Rd. #14-1, Windsor, ON N8Y 3L1, Canada) (Ariel)

PHYAL has a single-song demo CD. The song is a mid-tempo track with a bit of drive to it. It's punkish, with some elements of metal or early-80s hard rock. The guitars go from muted power chords to melodic chord progressions and then into some metallish picked-out riffs. Altogether it's sort of like ALL but with a female vocalist. (1 song CD, no lyrics, www.phyal.co.uk) (Pete)

POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT is a posi sXe thrash band. Nothing new or exciting, but it's solid. They state that, "Short ad fast never gets old. So don't fix it if it's not broke." (9 song tape, lyrics included. 20 Woodlawn St. #2, Jamaica Plain, MA 02130. xposiforcex@yahoo.com) (Ariel)

SHOT BY BOTH SIDES is all over the place musically, without making a mess of it. Mid-tempo is about the only constant, and then, for every lighthearted part there's a dark double-bass breakdown; for every flashy guitar bit there's a melodic break-down bass part, etc. The vocals also run the gamut, with a dark, shouting, sore throat singer guy, and a clear-singing vocalist appearing in every song. (4 song CD, no lyrics included. 213 Hyde Park Road, Leeds, LS6 1AH, UK.) (Erin)

THE SKUDS sent in a live demo, starting out with an instrumental theme song, then ripping it up for the rest of the tape. Energy and anger like real mid-80s hardcore, including some noodly guitar held over from the just-before-crossover era! The emotions are palpable, the drummer hits hard, and yelling at the audience for fucking up the shows is, unfortunately, another timeless bit of punk rock. The shouted vocals add texture and depth to the rage. Sounds real good. ($3 ppd. 10 song cassette, no lyrics included. 804 Ellis St. Apt. B, Augusta GAA, 30901,) (Erin)

SOUR GRAPES has sweet, old-style K Records indie-rock songs that are about setting people on fire and other totally punk things ("I might be a ho, but at least I'm not a jerk"). Clever and funny, and although there seems to be piano and guitar in every song, they're vocally driven. (15 song CD, no lyrics included. P. O. Box 12409, Portland, OR 97212.) (Erin)

SUPERVOSS plays catchy, slow- to mid-tempo rock like later REPLACEMENTS mixed with radio sensibilities. The solo instrument in the break is a kazoo, and not an out of tune saxophone! They have an anthemic quality that may come from the clear, full, slick production as much as the layering of vocals that make you want to sway with a lighter. (3 song CD, no lyrics included. Brokstrasse 36, 28203 Bremen, Germany) (Erin)

VIDAS EM CHAMAS plays straightforward hardcore with catchy and tough parts. It's fast and solid, with no frills. The mosh parts get metally, but the fast parts are pure punk. ($3 or trades. 6 song CD, lyrics included. R. Alvarenga Peixoto, 167, Joinville, SC, 89204-430, Brazil.) (Erin)

WEAPONS OF CHOICE starts out with acoustic guitar and whistling, which frightened me. But no! It's a demo recording with a teenage, acoustic, NEW MODEL ARMY sound and similar politics, and then he brings on the snot and more "fuck you" politics like Ben Weasel used to. Honest and real. ($1 ppd. 310 W. 2ond St., Anderson, IN 46016.) (Erin)

CHRONICLE A/D

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There is no place for silence in times like these. They are nourished by it...Encouraged by it... How can power so corrupt go unchallenged? Never has the sinister nature of warmongers been so thinly disguised. Never has a country been so willing to be manipulated by fear. The bastards give you bloodsport war and you cheer them. You re-elect them. You are given lies and say thank you. When the lies are exposed you demand that they be covered back up. Silence.

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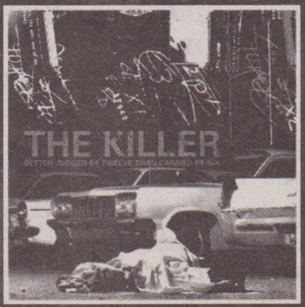

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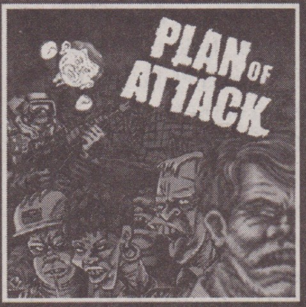

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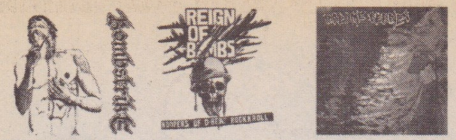

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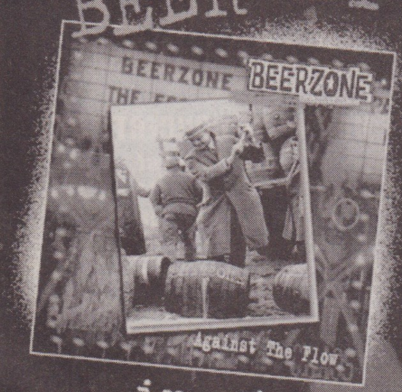

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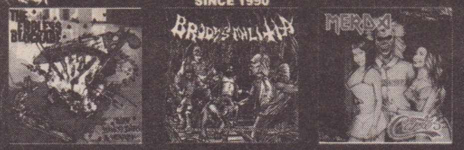

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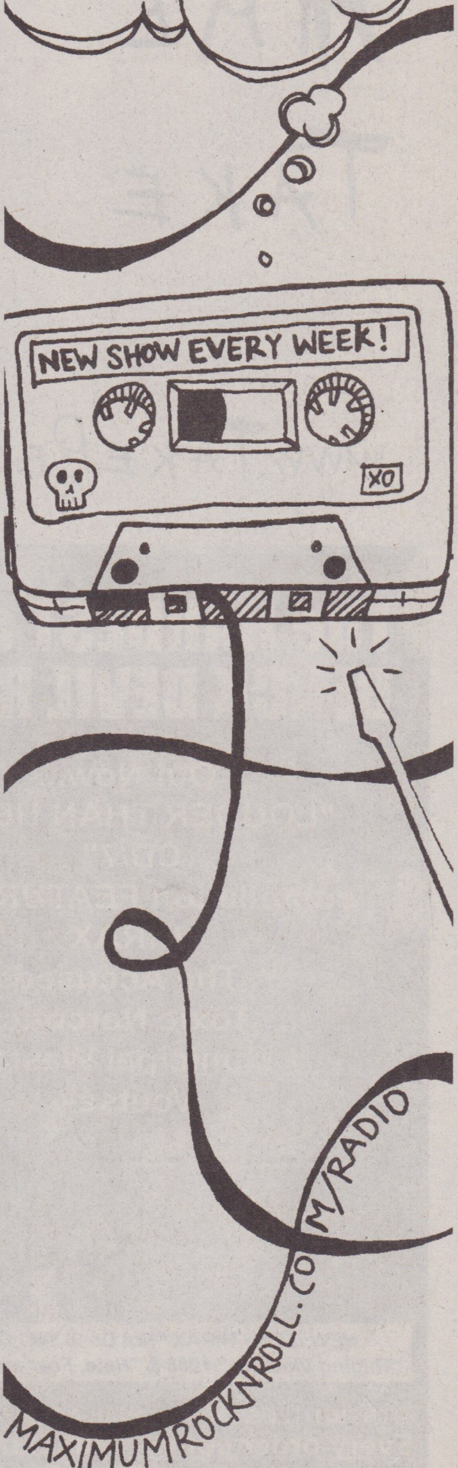

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Reviews by: (AR) Aragorn, (JB) Julia Booz Ullrey, (PC) Paul Curran, (JD) Jip Daems, (MD) Mikel Delgado, (BD) Ben Ditch, (LG) Layla Gibbon, (CH) Cassie Harwood, (HH) Harald Hartmann, (JM) Jeff Mason, (GN) Golnar Nikpour, (CR) Casey Ress, (CQ) Cooper Quintin, (AS) Andy Shoup, (DS) Dionne Stevens.

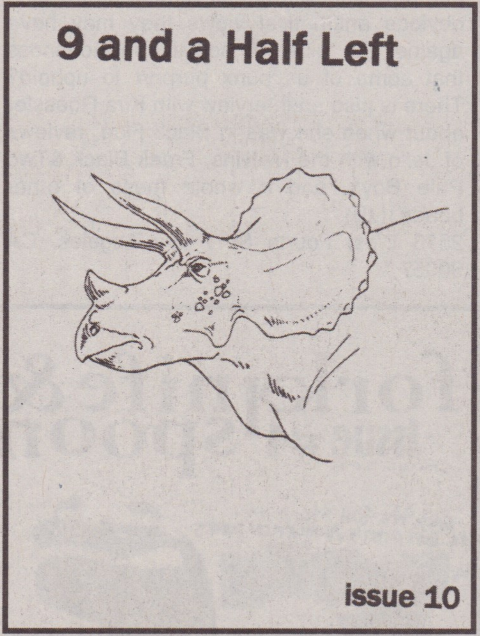
Please send your zine in for review to MRR, PO Box 470760, San Francisco, CA 94147. Write down any information you want included in the review; method of printing, number of pages, issue number and postpaid price. If you want us to include a foreign postpaid price, tell us. If you accept trades, tell us. The only information we will include is what you provide us.

9 AND A HALF LEFT #10 / $1 or trade
5.5 x 8.5 – copied – 28 pgs
I've always wondered what the name of this zine means—did the editor lose his finger? This zine is equal parts birth control and brow furrower. See, if hanging out with children reminds you, violently, that you don't want any, reading about them has the same effect on me. Or rather, if you are interested in punk parenting, this zine is for you. I just feel tired thinking about living this guy's life, working constantly, and being excited to go on walks if it just means getting to leave the house at all. I'm sure there is something rewarding about babies—there must be, why else would people have invented fertility drugs? But when they come as a surprise that you aren't ready for, it makes for a sacrificial sort of sadness. This one reads like a sad story that has no end. (JB)
Mike Rodemann / 13426 Merl Ave. / Lakewood, OH 44107

AB #4 / $2
5.5 x 8.5 – copied – 16 pgs
This zine focuses on doing things yourself. It has an article on boosting the AM reception on your radio, using gliders, the benefits and dangers of soy products, and a variety of other guest articles. Interesting information, although not everything was that useful to me personally. This zine is very DIY and steers towards living and surviving outside of mainstream American culture. (JD)
PO Box 190-ab / Phlm. OR 97370

AK INK #15 / $1
6.5 x 8.5 – copied – 26 pgs
This zine starts out with some record reviews layed out next to some painfully pixilated album art. Yikes. Then there are some show and film reviews, also featuring pixilated artwork. I was pretty into the film reviews (of *Sin City* and the George Lucas' first movie *THX 1138),* as well as the inexplicable but totally hilarious poem entitled "World's Greatest Zombie." The writing in this zine ranges from passable to strong, but the layout made it hard to get through. (GN)
PO Box 244235 / Anchorage, AK 99524

ANARCHY #59 / $5
8.5 x 11 – printed – 82 pgs
This is the first issue of *Anarchy* that was put together in California instead of Missouri. I must honestly admit that I have never read any of their previous issues, even though I sometimes have briefly flipped through them, so I can't really comment on whether or not the move has changed the magazine very much. There are a lot of book and media reviews in here and I think it's great that the magazines and books get pretty in-depth reviews. Besides the reviews there is a retrospective on the 25th anniversary of the magazine, and there are columns and a letter section. Tons of reading in here, and definitely worth picking up. (JD)
PO Box 3445 / Berkeley, CA 94703

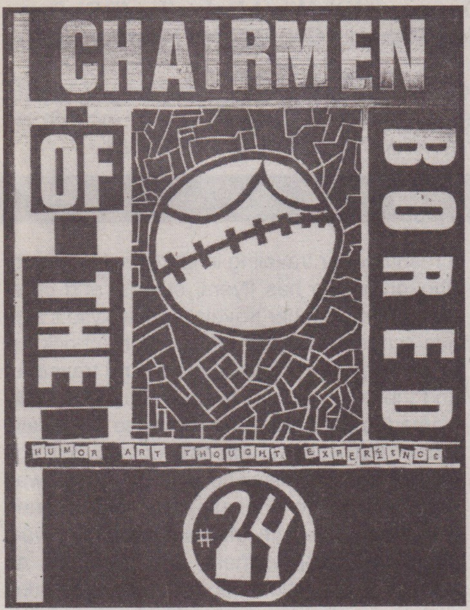


ANYWHERE BUT HERE / NOWHERE FAST / $?
5.5 x 8.5 – copied – 120 pgs
An exceptionally long, split travel zine by two traveling punk girls, both of whom go out of their ways to situate themselves in the grand punk hobo tradition. Sophie's side is more of a resource for traveling in Glasgow, Scotland, (though it also has flyers, stories, and other ephemera from her travels), while Kylie's side has a nearly endless introduction (chock full of musings about girls, queers, and travelers) and then stories from her adventures. I really wanted to like her writing, because it's always rad to read about tough girls doing crazy shit on the road and elsewhere, but instead I was reminded of the first rule they teach young writers: don't *tell* me what a great time it was, *show* me. Happily, these girls are punk as fuck, and I bet I would enjoy a late night drink and story-telling session with them, but this zine fell short of earning a recommendation from this reviewer. Also, it came to me stinking of patchouli, which is pretty crazy (and unfortunate), considering it was sent from fuckin' Australia. (GN)
sophiesucks@hotmail.com

BARRICATA #3 / $ 5.00
8 x 11 – printed – 64 pgs – French
Wow! Great cover, I wanted to cut it out and hang it on my wall. This image describes America at its most poignant self: a military state at war with the rest of the world. Inside this issue are interviews with the bands Oppressed, Stage Bottles, and Anti-Flag. There are also interviews with Winston Smith, Noam Chomsky, *Profane Existence* and the American Indian Movement. This fanzine also has some really cool photos, a great, easy-to-read layout, and lots of cool book and record reviews. Finally, I wonder if these are the same people that put out the limited Les Thugs double CD, *Road Closed.* If they did, my suggestion to you, dear reader, is get your ass in gear send some money to France and ask for a copy of this fanzine and a copy of the CD. Les Thugs rule! (HH)
Crash Disques / 21 ter, Rue Voltaire / 75011 Paris / France
www.contre.propagande.org

CHAIRMEN OF THE BORED #24 / $3 or stamps
8.5 x 11 – copied – 38 pgs
Chairmen of the Bored is what prison zines should aspire to. It's big and multi-faceted, with personal and political rants, an interview

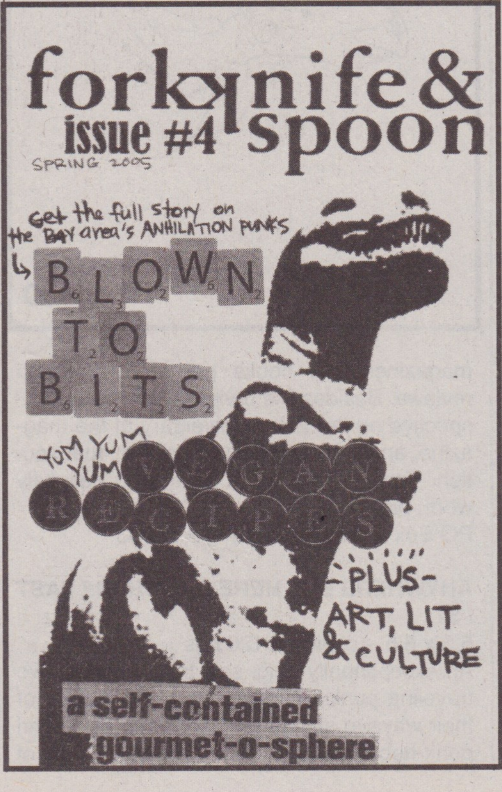
with Ryan of *Mishap* zine, collage layouts, zine and record reviews, and some comics. A super solid effort, but as always with prison zines, this will probably be most appreciated by other prisoners. (AS)
Fanorama Society / 109 Arnold Ave. / Cranston, RI 02905



CHUMPIRE #180 / stamp or trade
5.5 x 4 – copied – 8 pgs
Another issue of *Chumpire.* This guys keeps putting these out like it's nothing. In this issue is a story about making a yearbook, a couple of pictures and some record reviews. (JD)
PO Box 27 / Annville, PA 17003-0027
chumpire@hotmail.com

THE CIA MAKES SCIENCE FICTION UNEXCITING #3 / $1.50
4.5 x 5 – printed – 32 pgs
At first glance this zine (and the previous two issues) look not unlike a Chick tract, but instead of racist, homophobic, religious fervor, this zine details the dark underworld of hidden governmental abuses. This issue details the little known but frightening Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act and the secret court created by it. The overwhelming secret powers of this court are enough to send shivers down the spine of any hardened conspiracy theorist. The broad-ranging powers of this secret court include the ability to conduct surveillance, enter property, and confiscate evidence without the meager protections afforded under the Fourth Amendment. *The CIA Makes Science Fiction Unexciting* details the FICA, its relation to the PATRIOT Act, and the loss of our basic civil liberties clearly and concisely. It's a great read and pretty important if you're concerned about the clampdown that we're subject to in these scary days. (CR)
Microcosm Publishing / PO Box 14332 / Portland, OR 97293
www.microcosmpublishing.com

CITIZINE #8 / $3.25
8.5 x 11 – printed – 50 pgs
Well, here we are again. I feel like if you are the sort to appreciate the kind of material that *Citizine* supplies (i.e., interviews with bands from the 80s, or who is left of them, usually who aren't even making music right now, or if they are it is not punk music, and who don't really have anything to do with punk today, and are too brain damaged from all the partying to even remember anything) then you wouldn't even read *Citizine.* You would read *Search and Destroy*, *Slash*, *Flipside*, or even old *Maximum*s to find relevant pieces of history in interviews that actually reflect the times that spawned these bands we "worship". Goddammit. The washed-up-ass dudes who were in Fear grace these pages, and the only thing I can imagine I would be interested in reading about would be some kind of analysis of the possible effect of the blatant homophobia and bigotry that Fear championed in their stage persona, which of course does not get touched upon at all, or rather, the interviewer brings up how funny it was when Lee Ving said "It's great to be gay and be here!" to a San Francisco crowd, and that is it. Can we afford to iconicize bands without addressing obvious antithetical views they may have against the pillar of social consciousness that some of us punx purport to uphold? There is also an interview with Kira Roessler about when she was in Black Flag, reviews of Jello with the Melvins, Frank Black &Two Pale Boys, and a whole mess of other bands. (JB)
2513 West Fourth St. / Los Angeles, CA 90057



COUGH #3 / $1 US, $2 world
8.5 x 6 – copied – 20 pgs
This Bay Area based art and music zine didn't really grab me. There are interviews with 30 Years War and with the artists Mackie Osborne and Doram. The Mackie one was more interesting for me because I am a huge Melvins fan and she does their artwork. She mostly talks about technical graphic design stuff, and the book they put out and how she met Buzz. Somehow, this zine just wasn't that substantial. (LG)
PO Box 604 / Moss Beach, CA 94038

DOGPRINTS # 4 / $?
8.5 x 11 – printed – 20 pgs
Dogprints is part mail order catalog and part music zine. In this issue you can read interviews with Wolf Brigade, Legion 666, Stockholm Syndrome, Kid Dynamite, and bands I don't care about including. The focus musically here, beyond general punk rock, would probably be more in the hardcore vein. Read the interviews, then peruse the vast selection of Yellow Dog records, T-shirts and the like. (BD)
www.yellowdog.de

DOLL #215 / ?
10 x 7 – printed – 140 pgs – Japanese
For many years I've seen and assigned reviewers the slick, ad- and photo-filled Japanese magazine, *Doll.* Unfortunately, we've never had a reviewer who can read Japanese with enough proficiency to give a thorough review. Now it's my turn and all I can do is tell you that this zine is filled with tons of interviews, none of which I can read. Interviewed in this issue are The Dropkick Murphys, Napalm Death, SIC, The Unseen, The Star Club, Radio Caroline, and about fifty others. It looks great and if you can read it, it's probably pretty great. (CR)
(No. 303 Aota Bldg. / 3-1-9, Kita, Kohenji Minami / Suginami-Ku, Tokyo / Japan

FAKING DISTANCE / BIRTHDAYS & CHRISTMAS / $2
This is a well layed-out and creatively presented split zine, written, edited and printed all in a week. Both sides of this zine are of a personal nature. Microcosm's Alexx Wreck writes about traveling in Europe and about bike jocks in Portland. Korinna writes about feminism, white guilt, and livening up the work place with a little humanity. Both writers tackle their subject matter from intelligent and fresh perspectives, with equal parts humor and biting criticism. Kudos! (BD)
Microcosm Publishing / 5301 N. Minnesota Ave / Portland, OR 97217

FANZINE UNDERGROUND COMMITTEE ON KNOWLEDGE #3 / ?
13 x 8.5 – copied – 18 pgs
I thought this zine was great. *F.U.C.K.*, as the makers also call it, is a compilation zine that features contributions from zines like *How*

Much Art Can you Take, Game of the Arseholes, Destroy What Bores You, and *MRR* coordinator Golnar's zine *Square One Again*, amongst others. Despite the fact that this zine was made by multiple people, the strong theme throughout the whole thing is a strong sense of love of punk rock. There are mostly personal stories and reviews in here. The layouts look great and I just really loved the punk feel that this zine has. Highly recommended. (JD)
letsgetridofny@earthlink.net

FLAKES #2 / two stamps
8.5 x 11 – copied – 6 pgs
One of the canon of prisoner-created zines distributed by Fanorama Society, *Flakes* is short and sweet, but it's kind of a stretch to call it a zine. I have mucho admiration for prison zinesters and their plight, but I kind of reached my limit with this one. *Flakes* #2 is a handful of handwritten pages billed as being "like a letter directly to you from (Darren Hamby's) cage in Oregon." It is like that, I suppose, but I had a hard time with the muddled, sloppy writing, Hamby's way of referring to a waitress in his story as a "serving wench," and Hamby's habit of quoting Rush, Eric Clapton and Prince. (AS)
Fanorama Society / 109 Arnold Ave. / Cranston, RI 02905

FLESH WAVE #1 / $3
8.5 x 11 – copied – 20 pgs
Part of an abundant supply of xeroxed, large format, punk rock fanzines this month. There's a bit too much filler in this one—like, half of it is some weird comic. But I like the chaotic, cut-n-paste collage style, and some of the photos are really cool. There's one of a dude singing while doing an air on a skate ramp! I was about to skip this one page cuz it looked kinda boring, but it turned out to be instructions for how to make your own monster head out of latex, foam and popsicle sticks... fuckin' rad! This also comes with a damn good comp tape with four Michigan bands: Death In Custody, Goddamn, The Bill Bondsmen (interviewed in the zine, as well), I Accuse! and Pub Life. (PC)
21620 Hoffman / Saint Clair Shores, MI 48082
fleshwave@hotmail.com

FORK, KNIFE & SPOON #4 / 2 stamps or trade
5.5 x 8.5 – copied – 16 pgs
Kinda sparse, kinda goofy, kinda outta place, kinda lacking a significant point, but overall not offensive or completely boring. The interview with Blown to Bits is pretty interesting because it is disjointed and really shows some personality, while also detailing the sad story of surviving a flash flood whilst on tour. I think this zine should be twice as long and leave out the recipes because they are filler and nobody is going to use them. Although, given the title of the zine, perhaps it is intended to be mainly recipe oriented, and the rest—interview, book reviews, random arty pictures and a confusing piece on the spoonless society—are the filler. (JB)
5209 E. 8th St. / Oakland, CA 94601

THE FUTURE BELONGS TO GHOSTS #3 / $1
7 x 8.5 – copied – 16 pgs
"Whenever I see this much toner, I want to cry." So says my former Xerox-repairing boyfriend. This zine is copies of stark paintings based on photographs of bands previously printed in hardcore zines. While all for the world of art, I can't say this was particularly interesting or impressive. (MD)
Terrence Hannum / PO Box 220651 / Chicago, IL 60622
lindy8hop@aol.com

HOW MUCH ART CAN YOU TAKE? #6 / **DESTROY WHAT BORES YOU** #? / $1
5.5 x 8.5 – copied – 36 pgs
You say you've never seen *How Much Art Can You Take?* That's a shame for you, since Randy consistently comes up with the most off-the-wall, punk-as-fuck shit. Ramblings about records, bizarre and hilarious drawings, irreverent layout and photos, and silliness galore rules supreme in his zine. Nothing so instantly classic as the "Trag" haircut from the last issue, but still, a fuckin' great zine, and one of my favorites. On the flip we have *Destroy What Bores You*, formerly based in Patterson, NY but now cut 'n' pasted in the new youth mecca of Austin, TX. Dave covers all sorts of punk shit from the Tyrades to Selfish to Teengenerate with equal enthusiasm. Of particular note in this issue is an interview with the always interesting Erick Lyle (neé Iggy Scam). I gotta hand it to these guys, it's zines like this that keeps punk zine-making alive and well. There's no search for glory or faux rock journalism in these pages, just a love for punk that is both infectious and inspiring. (GN)
(Dave Hyde / PO Box 49631 / Austin TX, 78765)

IMMIGRANT #2 / free
6.75 x 9.5 – printed – 64 pgs
Immigrant appears to hail from Greece, but it's hard to tell. There is a Greek address in the zine, but a New Jersey address on the business card included with the zine. Whatever the case, *Immigrant* comes off as well-designed and extremely passionate. There are editorials, columns, comics, show and record reviews (including eight reviews of records from Greek bands!) and interviews with PO Box, Burial, and No Hope for the Kids. In Greek and English. (AS)
118 Bright St. / Jersey City, NJ 07302
Immigrant_zine@yahoo.com

JUNKET #2 / $3
x 8.5 – copied – 56 pgs
There's nothing worse than a letter that comes with a zine saying, "Please don't give my zine to the same girl as last time because she sucks"—especially when that girl is a boy who happens to be a dear friend of yours. Oh well. Despite getting off to a bad start, I did enjoy these tales of being a cab driver in Pittsburgh, which involve celebrities, drug dealers, guns, stupid yuppies and every other type of person and situation you fear you would encounter if you were driving a cab. The stories are interesting and funny, and I liked this zine, despite the fact that the editor has an attitude problem. (MD)
Justin Cummings / PO Box 7183 / Pittsburgh, PA 15213
justin@crucialunit.com

KULTUR KAMPF / $1
11 x 8.5 – copied – 31 pgs
A traditional cut and paste style zine straight outta Evanstown, IL. There is an interview with a random rockabilly guy called Theo, and one with a Hydrahead band I have never heard of called Pelican (though apparently they play instrumental metal and have supported Appleseed Cast, so I hope to continue never to have heard of them). There's a play (!!??) that bemoans the fact that Joan Osbourne now sings for the Grateful Dead, some poetry that compares our civilization to an abattoir, and a very long article about fucking Radiohead's impact on western youth. (LG)
2714 Princeton Ave / Evanstown, IL 60201

MAXXXZINE #2 / $2
7 x 8.5 – copied – 64 pgs
This eclectic zine was done by my best friend from high school who I have not heard from in many years. His exit strategy from the punk scene proper seems to have involved growing

an ironic 70s mustache and taking photography a lot more seriously. This zine contains material that is up to 15 years old, with pictures of Judge, Chain of Strength and Integrity. The interviews include Offspring (circa 92), Louis Wylie (Kokamo), Catherine Wheel, and Pinback. The zine is pretty random but may have enough to grab your attention for a couple of shits. There is a nice eulogy of a friend of ours (Matt Brown) on the inside back cover. (AR)
PO Box 682 / Fairfax, CA 94978

MEDIA WHORE #5 / $2
5.5 x 8.5 – copied – 32 pgs
I could really take a liking to zines like this if they weren't always too short to ever get started. I am actually surprised that there wasn't a college essay in here masquerading as an article. I really want this zine to spark debates and be critical of more widespread issues that apply to women. There is a reflective article this issue about how riot grrrl is largely believed to be the name for a certain collection of people making music and talking shit in the early 90s, who have since moved on—or perhaps people think their cause is now irrelevant. The article brings up an issue that I believe needs attention and could really be larger in scope than what is covered here. Perhaps the next issue of *Media Whore* will be a theme issue that will rise to the challenge. (JB)
12 B Wolcott St. / Malden, MA 02148

MEMORY LOSS #1 & #2 / free? trade? stamps?
4.25 x 5.5 – copied – 22 pgs
In my mind, these tiny collections of stories and art are the pinnacle of zine perfection. Heather has collected blackout stories from her wild-ass friends, and compiled them lovingly with illustrations, including multi-color screenprinted covers. The stories are hilarious and variably unbelievable. But then, how are we to know if anything is real when we rely on other people to tell us what we did last night? If you can write a funny letter to Heather, or contribute a story of your own, be sure to send stamps, or a can of Sparks, or an upside down cross earring. (JB)
Heather F. / 1316 Fitzgerald Ave. / Oakland, CA 94608
xeroxdisasters@yahoo.com

MISHAP #19 / $2-$3 or trade
5.5 x 8.5 – copied – 50 pgs
Mishap is a text-heavy zine with a smattering of graphics in the margins. The content includes personal material, local politics, and book and zine reviews. There is a piece about Ad Council public service announcements that's really good. *Mishap's* creator, Ryan, proposes a PSA in which the Bush twins decry their father for his atrocities, saying, "When my father and his minions committed war crimes, he not only killed tens of thousands of innocent people, he killed my love for him." Awesome. (AS)
P O Box 5841 / Eugene, OR / 97405

MOVE YOUR ASS #9 / $ 4
8 x 11 – newsprint – 48 pgs – Czech
This fanzine is a great place to start for anyone interested in the Czech scene. You will find lots of interesting ads here for where to buy really cool punk stuff on your next trip to Prague. Also included in this fanzine are columns, record reviews and lots of interviews with eastern European bands including Rentokill, Festa Desperato, Nuit, Rozpor, Landmine Spring and others. (HH)
Jan Kovar / Po Box 18 / Chrastava 463 31 / Czech Republic

THE NEUS SUBJEX #64 / #1
3 x 5.5 – copied – 16pgs
Small. Compact. The guy that does *Neus Subjex* sure is tenacious. 64 issues—wow! This issue begins with some musings and show reviews from the editor, an article about how punk rock has changed over the years, and of course your typical fanzine and record reviews. Seriously though, the font on this is smaller than *Slug and Lettuce*! (GN)
PO Box 18051 / Fairfield, OH 45013-0051

OX FANZINE #58 / $8
8 x 11 – printed – 132 pgs – German
As usual this fanzine is an encyclopedia of punk rock. It has something in it for everyone. There are interviews galore, including Malcolm McLaren, Cheetah Chrome, Todd, Slayer, Haymarket Riot, Helmet, Le Tigre, 7 Seconds, the Donnas, Detroit Cobras, and more. There are pages and pages of record reviews, loads of ads, movie and book reviews, plus comics and columns. This fanzine also comes with its customary free 28-song CD sampler. My only beef with this issue is that the sampler starts off with a cut from the Knights of the New Crusade CD. The song is about the bands love of Jesus and how Jesus is going to save us all. First, this song has no sarcastic wit about it. There is no humor whatsoever in the lyrics. This is a serious song about being saved. My response, shove your goddamn fish up your born-again butthole. There is no room for religion in punk rock, and if there is then I wish punk rock dead!!! (HH)
OX Fanzine / Po Box 10 22 25 / 42766 Haan / Germany
www.ox-fanzine.de

PLASTIC BOMB #51 / $7
8 x 11 – printed – 112 pgs – German
It is all here inside these pages—everything one wanted to know about punk rock worldwide. This issue includes scores of interviews, including the bands Rejected Youth, Vandals, Sonic Bastards, Rock N Roll Stromtroopers, Skeptix, Derita Sisters, Blutjungs, Crimson Ghosts, plus many more. There are also lots and lots of record reviews, ads, columns, punk news, and other tidbits of useless information. And to top it all off this damn thing comes with its usual free 28-song CD sampler. Finally, *P.B.* offers a great catalogue for buying records, and they are selling the new releases of some rare German records including the impossible to find Bluttat first LP. (HH)
Plastic Bomb / Postfach 100205 / 47002 Duisburg / Germany
www.plastic-bomb.de

POCKETFUL OF CHANGE #1/ $3
8.5 x 11 – printed – 32 pgs
Decent quality music zine, especially for a first issue. Interviews with the Soviettes, DEK, T Duggins, Hed 1st, and an article/interview about the film *Mass Murderers Anonymous*. Cool front cover of art by Eric Doeringer. There are loads of ads, record and show reviews for various punk bands, and it comes with a CD with MDC, DEK, The Cliftons and others. (MD)
1005 N 36th St #2 / Seattle, WA 98103
www.pocketfulofchange.com

THE PUTANG INA M TURBO CORE ZINE / $?
8.5x11 – copied – 12pgs
Ah yes, in this age of computer layouts it's nice to see an old-fashioned punk rock cut 'n' paste fanzine. This one, from the Philippines, has got all the goodies a well-rounded fanzine should have. You've got your columns, your interviews, and your fanzine reviews… there's even a Philippines scene report reprinted from the pages of *MRR*. Good stuff. (BD)
Jay Garcha / Cluster M, Lot 72 / Bagong Nayon 1 / Antipolo City 1870 / Philippines

REBEL STEW #2 / donation
7 x 8.5 – printed – 52 pgs
This project used to be called *Tyrannicide*. When it was I referred to it as part of the new tendency of "Woodworthian" (referring to the editor of *The Match*, Fred Woodworth) anarchism that relies on rationale and ethical arguments for anarchism as a preferred way to live, and criticisms of the current order as being a parody of the values they would claim to espouse. This new issue is a bit toned down and focuses on military recruitment and news articles that portray the sorry state of so-called freedom in this country. There are some nice anarchist pieces on individualism (*Rebel Stew* takes more of a classic individualist position than Fred does), Diogenes the Cynic, and a letter section from Voltairine. This is an interesting, compelling, and thoughtful project. (AR)
2925 Lawrence Drive / Falls Church, VA 22042

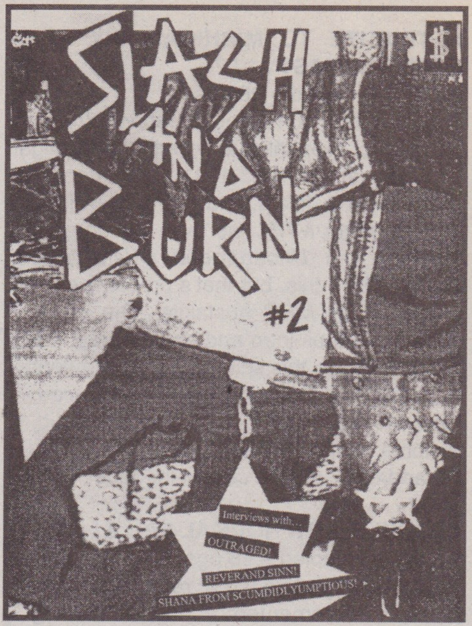
THE RISE AND FALL / $2
8.5 x 6 – printed - 50 pgs
This is a great local zine that covers the San Pedro scene… of course there is an obligatory Mike Watt interview, and a nostalgia infused review of the Minutemen film *We Jam Econo*, which I am psyched to see this summer. It's not so much what this zine contains that makes it rad, but the feeling of a tight knit punk community that emerges from its pages. Homemade back yard skate ramps, local landmarks and heroes. There is an interview with Linda Lee Bukowski, Charles' widow (conducted by Mike Watt, she is apparently a big Minutemen fan!) that is really interesting about his later years in Pedro and his interactions with fans and other writers. Other less interesting interviews with Manic Hispanic and the Lipstick Pickups, random stuff on the Misfits, the building of a ramp Burnside style under a freeway, and the death of a punk house. You should send off for this and try making a zine about your hometown scene that's as good. (LG)
PO Box 1794 / San Pedro, CA 90733
www.theriseandfall.com

SHORT, FAST & LOUD #13 / ?
8.5 x 11 – printed – 96 pgs
Another quality issue from these folks. The format is strangely familiar: top tens, columns, tons of record reviews and interviews, as well as ads from all the punkest of the punk labels. *SF&L* always has great photos, enthusiastic record reviews, and above-average interviews. This issue also has a fun feature on people's top five show spaces of all time. Hardcore to the max. (PC)
225 Lincoln Ave. / Cotati, CA 94931
akautsch@aol.com

SKIN GRAFT #6 / $1
This is a zine of prose and pondering. A breath of fresh air in a world dominated by generic music zines (at least in my world). Stefan is an engaging writer and has an eye for design. His stories are funny, insightful, and often absurd. The stories are mostly of a personal nature, be it travel stories or just mind-wandering diatribes. Hell yeah! (BD)
Stefan Christensen / 7 Skytop Dr / Norwalk, CT 06855
jsgc138@yahoo.com

SLASH AND BURN #1 & 2 / $1
8.5 x 11 – copied – 20 pgs & 16 pgs
A well done DIY punk fanzine by Ryan of Punx Before Profits fame. In these two issues, Ryan discusses his love for and commitment to punk (right on!), and gives us interviews with Puerto Rican punx Tropiezo (my favorite of the bunch), Macedonia's FPO, Spain's Kärnvapen Attack, and California's Outraged, among others. Altogether, the punk aesthetic, cool photos, and worthwhile content makes this zine a winner. If you're gonna pick one, go with the first issue, but really they are both totally worthwhile. (GN)
Ryan Cappelletti / 209 Center St. / Olean, NY 14760

STREETMUSIC F.C. #12 / $ 4
8 x 11 – printed – 36 pgs – Swedish
This fanzine has a great layout that is both fun and easy to read. There are some pretty cool photos, plus band interviews with Bambix, Targetpoint, and The Oppressed. Finally, there are plenty of record reviews and some pretty good ads. Overall this is an excellent fanzine, especially for anyone who reads Swedish or is interested in this scene. (HH)
Stefan Fels / Gruvgangen 21 / 65343 Karlstad / Sweden
Stefan_fels@hotmail.com



TAKE YOUR SHOT #2 / $3
8.5 x 11 – copied – 24 pgs
I really like the look and feel of this zine. The large format is cool and reminds me of zines from the old days when they were still called fanzines. It's rough around the edges while still looking good and being readable. This Greek zine, written in English, features interviews and reviews, and focuses mostly, but not exclusively, on straight edge and thrash. Best bit: "A Fast as Fuck Interview with Kurt Brecht from DRI." Nine questions in one page! (I was hoping for 22, but you can't have everything.) Other interviews include Vitamin X, Dead and Gone Records, FPO from Macedonia, and Greece's own Vodka Juniors. The interview with San Diego's Last Priest (ex-members of Find Him and Kill Him) is interesting. They have some criticism of "hardcore" dancing, a topic which seems to be taboo in some circles (that would be a pun, except those kids don't dance in circles anymore!). Greece has a very small punk scene, so I'm sure zines like this help a lot with making a connection to the larger, worldwide punk scene. *Take Your Shot* is worthy of your support, so why don't you check it out? Maybe send him an extra buck or two… (PC)
Fotis Patikas / Thessalias 43 / Glyka Nera 15344 / Athens, Greece
takexyourxshot@yahoo.com

TOO MUCH COFFEE MAN #22 / $4.95
8.5 x 11 – printed – 64 pgs
There can never be enough comics. I truly feel that fiction can never be good enough to warrant getting in the way of comics. Leave the fiction writing to the people who can't draw. And continue the funny and shitty made

up reviews and pile the cynicism to the sky. Make fun of war and religion and porn and tattoos. Leave no bad joke unsaid. Love life. (JB)
Adhesive Press / PO Box 14549 / Portland, OR 97293

A TRIBUTE TO MICHIGAN DIY PUNK FROM THE PAST #1 / ?
8.5 x 11 – copied – 28 pgs
This is a zine consisting of reprints from old fanzines of everything to do with the Michigan punk scene from 1983-1991: band interviews, scene reports, flyers, and even ads. A lot of it comes from *MRR*, as well as long lost fanzines like *Underground Offensive* and *Gothic*. I love this, but that's probably cuz I'm a sucker for *MRR* nostalgia. The editor adds a hilarious intro and does a great job of repackaging this shit in the way it meant to presented: fucked up and photocopied. Now go start your own encyclopedic, regional, retro fanzine! (PC)
No address—please send it in, dude

TROUBLE WITH NORMAL #75 / $1
5.5 x 8.5 – copied – 48 pgs
This is mostly a live music review zine with bands commented on including Warhammer 48K, The Vets, Kim Chi, Leah Quinelle All Stars, Thinline, National Fire Theory, Paul Westerberg, etc. The striking thing about most of these reviews is that they generally focus on the positive which isn't necessarily the most accurate, or useful, way to review an experience but *c'est la vie.* Interviewed bands include the Groovy Ghoulies and GFK. There are reviews. (AR)
PO Box 329 / Columbia, MO 65205-0329

TRUST #111 / $ 5
8 x 11 – printed – 68 pgs – German
Wow! Did I get all the fanzines with the coolest covers this month? I must have because this fanzine is another one with a really cool cover that shreds capitalism. And as usual the inside pages of this fanzine are punk rock, including interviews with the bands Piebald, Black Chats, 7 Seconds, Dalek, and Beauty Pill. There are also loads of cool record reviews, and plenty of ads. And of course if one is traveling in Germany this is the fanzine to pick up for gig listings. *Trust* is one of the great punk fanzines, and always an excellent read. (HH)
Dolf Hermannstaedter / Postfach 11 07 62 / 28087 Bremen / Germany
www.trust-zine.de

TURNING THE TIDE Vol. 18 No. 2 / $2
14 x 16 – newsprint – 8 pgs
Turning the tide is the most consistent anti-racist action paper coming out of the US. The editor Michael Novick is a tireless advocate for his brand of the anti-racist, anti-imperialist, and anti-colonialist line. He ably represents both the strengths and weaknesses of the position. In this issue's editorial, titled "Turning the Tables on the Empire," he uses Bush's declaration of "Mission Accomplished" as the vehicle to make the point that "we must defend ourselves and the Earth by every means necessary and every method consistent with our beliefs and goals." This is fine rhetoric that may galvanize first time readers into thoughts about the hypocrisy of Bush, but that isn't exactly rocket science. Of more concern is the idea that we should both use "every means necessary" (a common riff from Malcolm X) and "consistent with our beliefs and goals" which, once again, reads as better rhetoric than good sense. While I know many who would argue that radical politics *is* living consistently with their beliefs and goals, they

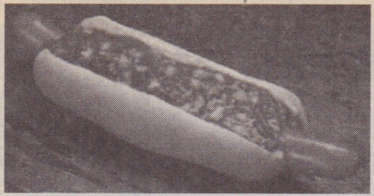
tend not to make the argument that eliminating the dominant system could be the result. Possibly TTT is the wrong format to really get into the strategic analysis of challenging Bush's order, but then what is the purpose of the rhetoric? (AR)
PO Box 1055 / Culver City, CA 90232

VERSUS #3 / 1 stamp
8.5 x 11 – copied – 24pgs
Versus is a zine written by recovering alchoholics from Surrey who don't want to label themselves as straightedge. Maybe it should be noted that as I write this revue, my roommates are drunk, screaming random words that they read from the pile of magnetic poetry on the living room floor, trying to make as much noise as humanly possible. The bastards wont break me though. Not today. In this issue you can read about some drunken exploits that lead to the decision to get sober. These people are sincere and not at all preachy. There are also interviews with Paint It Black, Judge, and Integrity. (BD)
70 Badshot Lea Road / Farnham / Surrey GU9 9LT / UK

WARNING #2 / $2
8.5 x 11 – printed – 28 pgs
The best music zine in punk? I can't think of too many that look or read better than this ardently cut 'n' paste zine, edited and compiled by Frank of Atrocious Madness and Lebenden Toten fame. It is beautiful. Who knew that black and white photos of punx layed out next to typewriter text could be so elegant? Well, the punks do of course! This issue features well-done interviews with current crusty hardcore favorites Reality Crisis and Hellshock, as well as a genuinely interesting interview with Sothira of Crucifix fame. There are also a bunch of excellent photos that I've never seen before of both current and older bands such as Poison Idea, Bomb Heaven, Deathcharge, Amebix, and fucking Sacrilege. Frank, where did you get this photo of Tam?! Are there more? Really, the layout is the best part—it is as punk as anything I've ever seen. The paper stock and print quality is nice too; the zine is printed by 1984 printers here in the Bay Area on recycled paper with vegetable based inks. Absolutely essential. (GN)
PO Box 40113 / Portland, OR 97240

WE HAVE THE DEATHRAY #2 / $1 ppd
5 x 4.5 – copied – 24 pgs
Travel/personal zines are getting beyond boring these days. Wanderlust, misanthropy, and general boredom of the twenty-something backpackers just isn't as interesting as it once was. However, our Canadian friend Skidge throws in my favorite element, strange sores on his head. *We Have the Deathray* is a pretty great story of Skidge's trip to the Bay Area and the resulting infection that grew and pussed on his head. Thinking it was herpes he started a herpes youth crew, only to be disappointed that he did not, indeed have herpes on his head. It's a good quick read and even contains some useful information about staph, herpes, and impetigo. Good times had by all. (CR)
PO Box 21530 / 1424 Commercial Dr. / Vancouver, BC V5L 5G2/ Canada

ZINEZINE #2 / $2
5.5 x 8.5 – copied – 44 pgs – German
I thought my German was better than it apparently is, but after reading through this zine for a bit I started to regain some of my previous familiarity with the German language. This zine is basically a zine about zines, which is a cool theme in my opinion. It has interviews with Aaron Cometbus and the maker of a German website about fanzines "fanzine-index.de." It also features zine reviews, and articles on zines and various aspects of zine culture. Very nice read. (JD)
Archiv der Jugendkulturen / Fidicinstr. 3 / 10965 Berlin / Germany



924 Gilman

Berkeley, California

JULY

Friday 15 $6
Battletorn (NY) • Gunsfire Mayhem (NY)
P.D.A.

Saturday 16 $6
Thought Riot • Love Equals Death
Daggermouth (Can.) • Broken October
Klonopin (S.D.)

Friday 22 $7
Bafabegiya (NV) • Disconnect (NV)
The Sweethearts (TX)

Saturday 23 $7
Lack Of Interest (L.A.)
Reproach (Belgium) • Haymaker (Canadia)
Coughing Up Blood (AL) • Crime Desire (L.A.)

Sunday 24 $7 *5pm*
Look Back And Laugh
Violent Minds (PA) • Jealous Again
Tropezio (P.R.) • Juvented Carasa (P.R.)

Friday 29
Bones Brigade (PA)
Motherspeed (L.A.) • Hiretsuken (NY)

Saturday 30 $7
Fleas and Lice (Holland)
Star Strangled Bastards
Motorama (Italy) • 7 Crowns (U.K.)
America's Dirty Thirty's

AUGUST

Friday 5 $5
Rock 'n' Roll Adventure Kids
The Bananas • Civil Duty

Saturday 6
Introspect (NV) • Loiter Cognition (NV)
Pom

Friday 12 $7
Go It Alone (Can.) • Life Long Tragedy
This Is Hell (NY) • At Risk • Revenge (Can.)

Saturday 13 $5
Babyland (L.A.) • BARR
This Song Is A Mess And So Am I
Modern Machines (WI) • K.I.T.

Friday 19 $7
Partyline (D.C.) • Paper Lanterns (CAN)
Origami (Australia) • Make Me

Friday 26 $7
Akimbo (WA) • Ass-End Offend (MT)
Saviors

$2 yearly membership
All shows are all-ages
Shows start at 8pm (unless noted)
Arrive an hour early to volunteer
Meetings 1st & 3rd Saturday @ 5 pm
No violence, drugs or alcohol
No racist, misogynist, or homophobic bullshit

Booking: 510-524-8180 (Tues & Wed 7-9 pm)
Show Info: 510-525-9926

www.924gilman.org

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The return of RIPCORD style Tokyo HC
BxUxSxH - EP
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OHUZARU - Debut LP
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DOPPELGANGER - EP
Blazing fast Bay Area powerviolence!
L'AMICO DI MARTUCCI/OHUZARU-CD
Collection of dual fast Italian HC
HATRED SURGE - Debut EP
One-person fastcore ala DESPISE YOU
HOSTILE TAKEOVER - EP
New Bay Area HC fast attack
HIGH ON CRIME - EP
ARTIMUS P members, heavy-pummel-core
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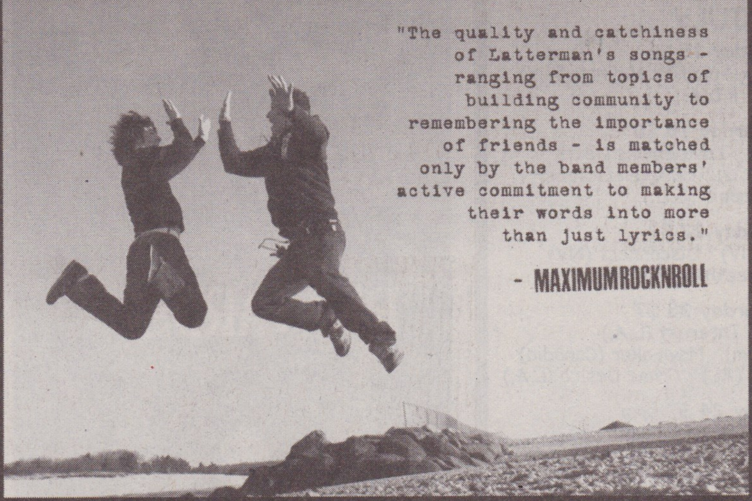

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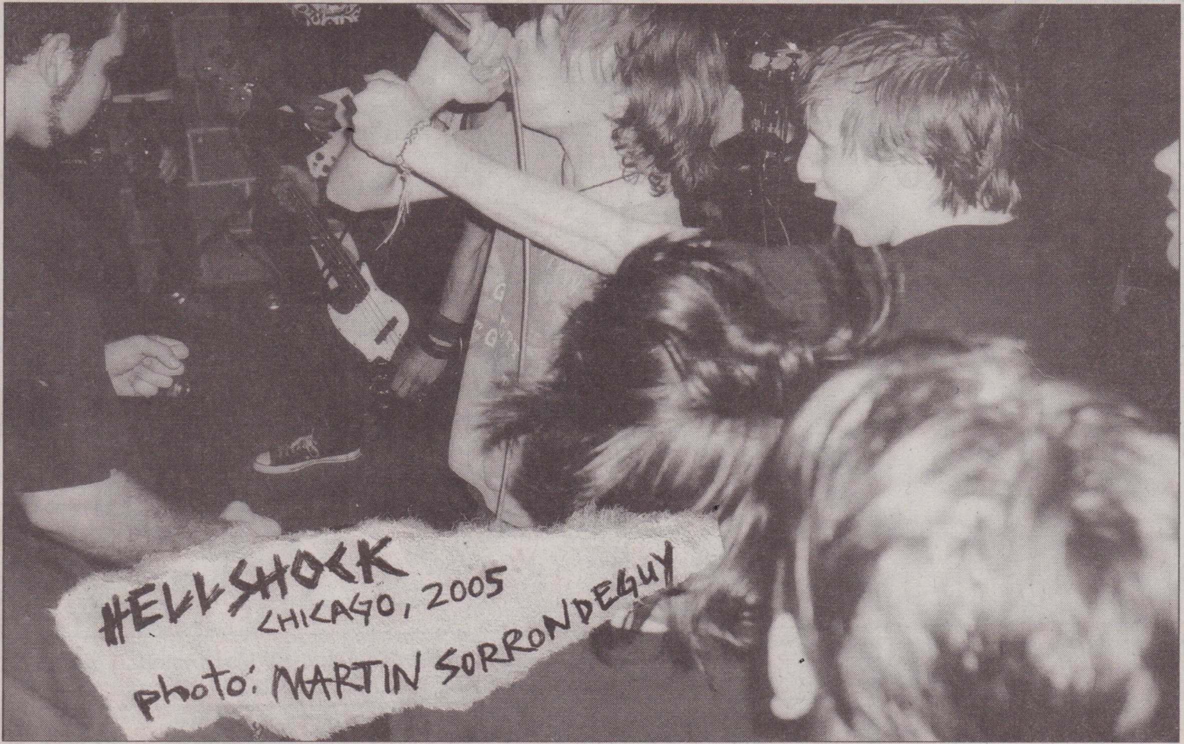

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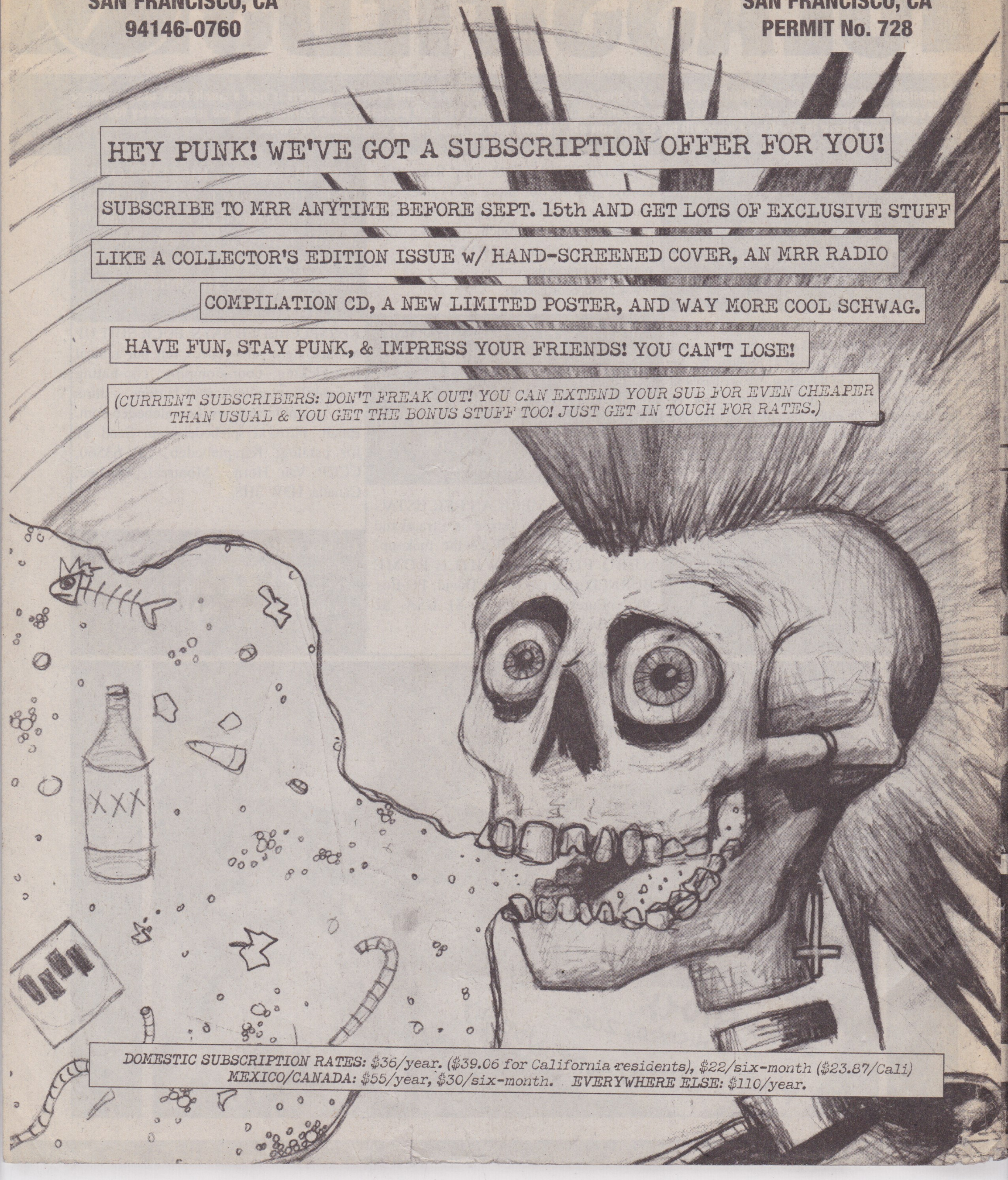
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